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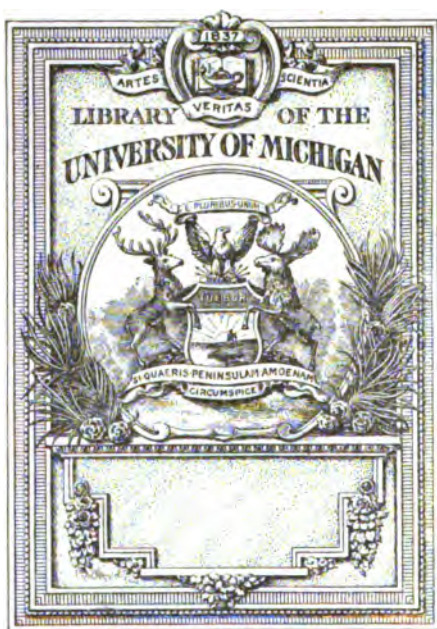
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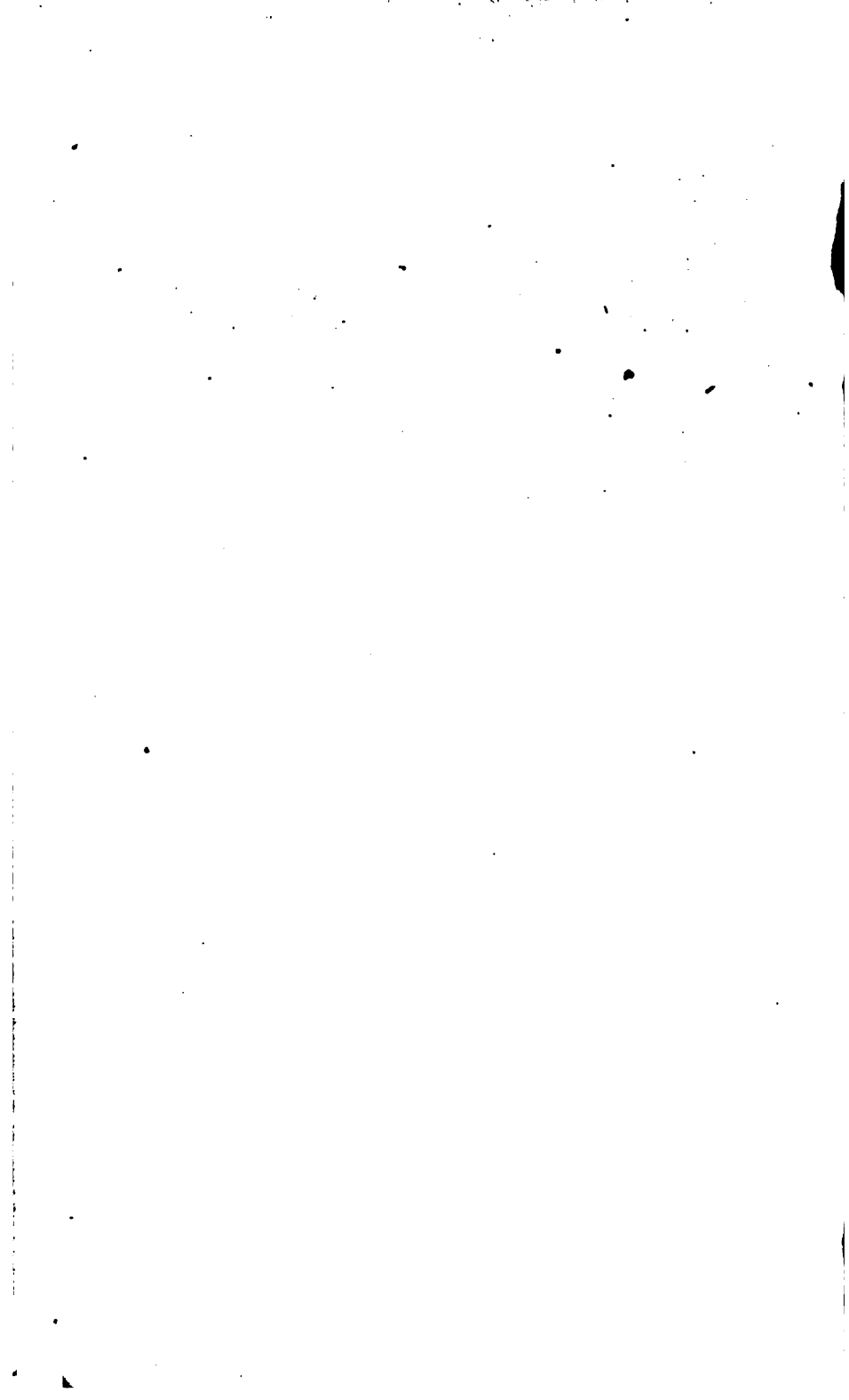
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"I wanted to give me this room for my very own, papa; I should like to have it.
I think I could live up here."

See 'The Mystery in Palace Gardens,' p. 73.

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LONDON SOCIETY.

JANUARY 1880.

THE MYSTERY IN PALACE GARDENS.

BY MRS. J. H. RIDDELL.

CHAPTER I.

THE EMPTY HOUSE.

WHEN the Franco-German war was quite over, and the French people were beginning to pay those milliards which once upon a time some very clever individuals on this side the Channel, in common perhaps with other clever individuals in a different country, thought that wonderful nation would never be able to scrape together,—when the reign of the Commune was ended and Peace once again spread her blessings through the fair land of France,—when the English had become almost accustomed to the fact of their neighbours over the water having decided to dispense with the assistance of either king or emperor,—when Napoleon III. was still alive, and dreaming (who can tell ?) of the earthly greatness he hoped still to compass, or the narrow grave he was so soon to fill, there stood a house in Palace Gardens, empty, and to be sold.

It had stood empty for a long time. The board in front which informed all those who passed by that the desirable residence might be treated for, had grown in appearance quite weather-beaten

with standing out amongst the evergreens during the passage of several springs, summers, autumns, and winters. The firm of auctioneers who might have been supposed closely interested in its welfare seemed to have forgotten its existence, for the very bills in the windows looked as if they too were weary of stating a self-evident proposition.

There were some to whom, passing that way as they did constantly, the house grew to be a haunting presence. When they woke in the night they thought of it standing there empty, with its curtainless and blindless windows staring out into the darkness ; when they were on 'Change or visiting their patients, or poring over a brief or considering the possibilities of a bill of costs, the house came between them and the sunshine.

Imaginative persons possessed of settled incomes, quite easy in their minds about money matters, with balances at their bankers', investments in safe securities, practically unlimited credit in the books of their tradespeople, shook their heads as they drove past, and decided the house would never be sold ; that it was haunted

by the ghosts of ruined men and defrauded women and beggared children, if by no worse phantom ; whilst practical folks—City magnates who rode to their business in order to benefit their maltreated livers ; clerks, happy in knowing nothing whatever about their livers ; gentlemen who were floating loans and negotiating concessions and advertising new companies and getting nominated as directors and supporting credit upon fictitious papers and financing banking account—looked at the house intelligently.

Many a man gazing at it must have thought, 'Some day, when I am in Spain, my house will be standing empty in like manner,' or, 'When my governor is in limbo, I wonder if we shall see his crib vacant, as this is, or if it will turn out to have been settled upon his wife ?'

Gamekeepers nail up a kite as a public warning and example to all other kites that they will be similarly dealt with, and yet so terrible a spectacle seems to exercise no sort of deterrent influence upon the species ; and in like manner, although the empty house in Palace Gardens had once been inhabited by a well-known man who, from foreign parts, could return to England no more, its mournful line of blank windows, its eternal iteration of 'To be sold—To be sold—To be sold ;' the green moss on its drive, the litter of leaves on its borders, its ill-kept grass-plot, the paint peeling from its doors, its silent bell, its vacant rooms,—had no more effect in turning even one commercial sinner into the straight and narrow path of rectitude than the sight of his fellow rat caught in a trap prevents his companion gray-beard tearing the flesh of the toothsome chicken or sucking the blood of the pretty pigeon, who

but yesterday at noon was preening her feathers and showing her many-hued beauties to the admiration of the sun.

Those who were not 'too deep in the swim'—to use an inelegant but expressive phrase—failed to read the lesson written on every pane of glass—on every blade of grass about the empty house—whilst for the others who were in the thick of the battle, who understood the matter from A to Z, from the setting out of the problem to its solution, they mentally cried, 'It is too late ;' 'We may as well see it out to the end ;' 'It is dangerous to go forward, but it is certain defeat to turn back ;' 'Who can tell how the fortunes of any commercial war may turn ?' and so held on in the broad way which led most of them to pecuniary disgrace and social destruction.

No man who reads his Bible could, I fancy, have passed that 'desirable tenement' and failed to think of the house 'built upon the sand.' As he remembered the lights which had once streamed from its windows, the carriages which had been driven through its gates, the music he had heard floating from its portals, the wealth and prosperity that had seemed to have taken up their abode within those walls, he could not forget the parable of that which happened when the rains beat and the winds blew.

Upon the man who once tenanted that house the winds had blown and the rains had beaten ; but being wise in his generation he provided against the accident which might happen as few provide for a certainty which must happen, and secured for himself a refuge when the evil time came and the magnificent commercial edifice he had reared, and that he knew to be rotten at the core, fell

with a crash, the noise whereof was heard throughout the length and breadth of England.

On a certain fine Friday in the year of grace 1866, he went into the City gaily. Things were going well with him, his ventures were prospering, not a ball of the many he had tossed up was as yet come to the ground. So far he had been able to keep them all going. Here one—there one—no person could tell how he managed, yet his busy brain controlled their action and prevented the collapse of a single scheme. He seemed to find time for everything—pleasure, business, philanthropy.

‘A master mind,’ observed spectators, admiringly watching the game, and not understanding in the least how it was played.

Well, yes, one may so far agree with the opinion of the world; but then, in his way, the late Mr. Peace must be considered a very clever gentleman, and no doubt Messrs. Benson and his associates and Messrs. Meiklejohn et Cie. possessed talents of a high order.

The daring and capacity, however, possessed by a respectable thief, who pursues his calling in a grand counting-house in the City, can scarcely be regarded as equal to that possessed by his humbler brother, who has not the prestige of a good commercial reputation, who has no known office anywhere, who lives just where he can, and steals as chance favours and occasion offers.

The spectacle presented by Mr. Peace driving amiably round the suburbs, and contemplating houses where he meant to operate, is more extraordinary than that of the promoter, who robs by virtue of an Act of Parliament, and collects the pence of widows and orphans with an air of as lofty superiority as though he were the great O’Connell.

The man who drove into the City on the especial Friday could have built many Conciliation Halls with the money which had, throughout England, been posted in answer to his many appeals; but he did not court that publicity. He was modest and content—satisfied with his office in Throgmorton-street, his house in Palace Gardens, and a little villa on the Thames. He had not any other place—he was not a shooting-man, or a riding-man, or a fishing-man, or a yachting-man. He felt pleased to see his friends about him at ‘the Gardens,’ as he abbreviated the name of his place of residence, and he would have liked, he said, ‘to get away, if he could, to Switzerland every year;’ but then he never could so get away, and there was ‘no use talking about such holiday making.’

‘Yes,’ he had a partner; *he* could leave, but with himself it was different. And people admired ‘that master mind,’ and bowed down before the colossal intellect.

When the crash came many understood why he had not been able to leave. They comprehended, if one of the balls had touched the ground it would have been all up with the player.

Sitting in his office all in the fine summer weather, there came a thunderbolt across the great leather-covered table.

‘Overends have gone, sir,’ said the head clerk, rushing into the room without knocking, and literally gasping for breath with his hurry and the greatness of his announcement.

‘Nonsense,’ retorted his employer.

‘It is a fact, sir. I have run all the way back to let you know. Cornhill is blocked up, and you might walk on the heads of the people in Finch-lane.’

The great financier rose a little unsteadily, as if he had taken at luncheon more than his accustomed three glasses of sherry, which just at that time a celebrated surgeon, now, alas, dead, was prescribing for all the ills flesh is heir to—rose, took his hat, looked into it as if he beheld some wonderful secret within the lining, and remarked,

‘Well, it is a sad pity; but, one comfort, it does not affect us.’

After this observation he went out and joined the crowd gathered around the Corner House, great with every likelihood of its becoming greater.

‘We have not got them yet from the West-end and the suburbs,’ remarked a sergeant of police, touching his hat deferentially to the commercial potentate.

‘They’ll have to order out the military, sir,’ observed a fussy old gentleman, who went on to add, ‘he did not approve of new ways of doing business; stick to the former paths and you can’t go very far wrong,’ he said, as well as the lack of teeth would let him say anything.

‘Ah!’ answered the happy individual whom the failure did not affect, ‘but what about the South-Sea Bubble?’

Scarcely a person he met who did not look dazed and bewildered. Millionaires, as they hurried by, waved their hands with a despairing gesture, as though to signify the end of the world was at hand. Panic was writ large on the faces of bank directors and bank managers. He was about to stop a principal in one of the great discount houses in order to ask him some question; but that gentleman had only time to shake his head in token of the ruin which hung over the devoted City ere he too had passed out of sight.

‘No,’ remarked an honest country squire, who stood contemplating the show; ‘I wouldn’t be the men who have wrought this ruin for all the gold in the Bank of England.’

‘I wonder they could sleep in their beds,’ cried a florid individual dressed in clerical style. ‘Ah, there is nothing like honesty—here we see the end of the wicked.’

The rich man who was possessed of a master mind turned and looked curiously at this speaker.

‘I should like to know the precise nature of the swindle you are engaged in, my friend,’ he thought, after he had stared him over from head to foot.

The crowd was every moment growing in number and fury; those people from the West-end and the suburbs the policeman had mentioned were coming, coming—residents in the country, up in town for pleasure or on business, had abandoned every plan and desire except a mad endeavour to reach the doors of the doomed Corner House; the noise was deafening, the excitement indescribable; if half the population had been struck dead there could not have been produced a wilder despair, a greater consternation.

Standing on a door-step, the gentleman who had his offices in Throgmorton-street looked upon the scene with a curious sense of viewing it from an immense distance. He felt, and he appeared, a mere spectator gazing upon a spectacle. If he had never been in business he could not have seemed further removed from sympathy with this tremendous commercial downfall. There was a curious expression about his mouth which induced one or two persons who were jostled up against him to think he was smiling at the great human exhibition then on view,

and they resented his merriment, but they were mistaken. He did not feel sorry and he did not feel glad ; it was nothing to him, nothing one way or another ; there was no reason why he should fight his way madly through the crowd, and indeed there was no good reason why he stood there at all.

'Those that win may laugh, Mr. Seaton,' said a harsh voice at his elbow ; and turning he saw a man who, like others, fancied he was amused by the play then in full progress.

'You, Allold !' he remarked, the sensation that he was acting some part in a dream growing stronger upon him ; 'I am not laughing, and I do not win—or—lose,' he added, after an almost imperceptible pause.

'What a lucky fellow you are ! I wish I could say the same.'

'Heavily hit ?'

For answer Mr. Allold drew his forefinger lightly but suggestively across his windpipe.

'So bad as that !' commented the great promoter, with a faint interest.

The other nodded and walked off.

The gentleman on the steps looked after his retreating figure and smiled in earnest.

'I do not think it is so bad as that. I daresay he is not in at all.'

Really it was like looking down from another world upon the shifts and lying and subterfuges and cares of this ; but after a time Mr. Seaton grew weary of it all, and returned to his office.

There he found his partner—a man, his junior in the firm, though his senior in age, who, having brought money into the business, asked anxiously,

'Will it affect us much ?'

'There is no telling. One can never know the houses that may be dragged down in a smash like

this ; but we need not walk out to meet trouble half-way. If it is coming it will be here soon enough.'

'You take matters very coolly.'

'It is of no use to take them otherwise ; yet—'

Afterwards the partner who had brought in money thought with a sort of frenzy over this conversation.

'He sat opposite to me, sir, where you are sitting now,' he explained subsequently to a solicitor, 'and never blenched. I give you my word I should, from his manner, as soon have ventured to suspect the Governor of the Bank of England.'

Though there was not much actual business to transact at his office Mr. Seaton did not leave till long after the time when he usually returned to Palace Gardens.

'There has been a tremendous failure in the City,' he remarked to his wife, in explanation of his detention ; 'but perhaps you have heard of it ?'

No, Mrs. Seaton had not heard of it. She had not been out ; and no visitor had called likely to be interested in such matters. It was understood in Palace Gardens as well as elsewhere that Mrs. Seaton did not profess any fondness for business affairs. Except in the most general manner her husband never at home spoke of commerce ; and when she drove into the City—to fetch him, as she sometimes did, though rarely—she did not alight from the carriage and enter his office, but sat outside awaiting his leisure.

She had not brought Mr. Seaton much of a dot ; but such as it was he settled carefully the amount on her. Other settlement she had none.

'A man cannot afford to take money out of his business,' Mr. Seaton said, when speaking on the subject. When he made this

observation, those to whom he addressed it laughed, and thought if any man could afford to do so, it was he.

'Yes, Overends have come to grief,' Mr. Seaton went on. It was at dinner he uttered these confidences; for returning so late there was no time for conversation before he dressed in order to sit down to that meal. 'A frightful affair; must mean ruin to thousands. I never saw such a sight in the City before.'

He talked about the matter a little longer, and then, seeing how little interest Mrs. Seaton seemed to take in the subject, passed on to other matters.

When the butler went down to the basement, he was very full of the news, and went out to try and get an evening paper. Not one was to be had in the neighbourhood, however, for love or money; and he must have gone to bed dissatisfied had another of the servants not discovered 'master' had brought one home with him, for a *Standard* lay on the marble slab surmounting the coil of hot-water pipes in the billiard-room.

Master had gone out saying 'no one need wait up for him;' mistress was in the boudoir playing the piano; the children were in bed; there happened to be no company that night, and in spite of the pleasant excitement caused by the tidings that so many people were ruined, the servants felt the house seemed dull and quiet; ere twelve they were all in bed and asleep. Long before that time Mrs. Seaton had closed the piano and gone up to her own room.

Never an early riser, it was nearly noon the next morning before her maid awoke her.

'If you please, ma'am,' said that functionary, 'Mr. Harriman is here and wants to see master.'

Now Mr. Harriman was the

partner who had brought money into Mr. Seaton's firm.

Mrs. Seaton opened her eyes and asked what the time was.

'Gone half-past eleven, ma'am.'

'So late; well he cannot expect to find Mr. Seaton here at this hour. He knows perfectly Mr. Seaton always leaves home punctually at nine o'clock.'

'Yes, ma'am, but he did not do so this morning; he never came home last night at all.'

'What can you mean?' asked Mrs. Seaton, bewildered.

'He never came home, ma'am; the door was on the latch this morning when Sarah went downstairs, and master always puts up the chain after he comes in; and he is not in his dressing-room, and he has not been to the office, and Mr. Harriman says, if you please, ma'am, he wants to know where he is likely to find him, for he is needed in the City most particular.'

All in a hurry Mrs. Seaton suffered her maid to assist her to dress, and ran down-stairs to the library, where Mr. Harriman waited her coming.

'It is most important I should see Seaton immediately,' he began. 'Can you tell me where I had better go and look for him?'

No; Mrs. Seaton could not. He went out after dinner, down to his club as she understood, and she had not seen him since.

'He was not going on any journey, I suppose?' asked Mr. Harriman.

'He did not say anything about going on a journey to me,' she answered, 'and he took no luggage, not even a bag.'

'You are sure of that, Mrs. Seaton?'

'Quite sure. I was crossing the hall when he went out.'

'And you have no idea where I can find him?'

'Not the least. Unless he has gone to the office, and you have crossed him as you came here; and yet,' she added, 'he would never go to the office without changing his dress. Do you think anything can have happened to him, Mr. Harriman?'

'No, I think not; but I fancy something has happened to me,' was the answer.

Mrs. Seaton looked straight in his face, and asked him what he meant.

'I would rather not say at present,' he replied. 'I hope and trust that I may never have to say fully what I mean.'

Without further ceremony he went out of the house and down into Kensington High-street, where, hailing the first hansom he met, he bade the man drive to Pall Mall.

Yes, Mr. Seaton had been at his club the previous evening; but he only stopped a few minutes. It was late, and he jumped into a cab, and told the porter to direct the driver to take him to Palace Gardens.

Mr. Harriman went from Pall Mall to Scotland-yard; there he had a tale to tell, and he told it.

'He has never left London, I think you will find, sir,' was the remark hazarded by the person in authority at the head office of police; 'but we will soon know all about it.'

In this case, however, as in many others, the police never knew anything about it. For all the information they could glean, Mr. Seaton might have thrown himself over one of the bridges or taken the wings of the morning and flown to the uttermost parts of the earth. He might have been in St. Giles's or in the next world; he had vanished utterly, disappeared as totally as though the

ground had opened and swallowed him up alive.

Mr. Harriman never saw him again. The detectives employed independently by many indignant creditors failed to discover the faintest clue to his whereabouts. Palace Gardens lost him for ever that night when he went out with only a light top-coat over his evening dress, and said no one need sit up for him. To wife and children he never returned; the postman left no letters from foreign parts; the 'master mind' had proved its superiority in this at least—that it enabled its possessor to disappear in the very nick of time, and to leave no trace nor tidings of his whereabouts.

Another twelve hours and he would have been under surveillance; now it was about as useful looking for him as for a needle in a truss of hay.

If he had stayed he could not have proved a source of profit to any one, and he might have been a cause of inconvenience to many. The lawyers made a great fuss about his disappearance; but they managed to run up plenty of costs, as they always do, no matter who goes or who stays, who wins or who loses. There was nothing for the creditors; but then, all the same, there would have been nothing had they sent him into penal servitude. It was very hard for his wife to encounter such a storm as ensued all alone; but her husband could not have stood beside her when in Millbank, and in Millbank most assuredly he would have found himself had he waited to stand his trial.

It was whispered that some of those who talked most loudly of his 'cowardice' in running away from 'the consequences of his own acts' and 'leaving them to bear the burden of his misdeeds' were

secretly rejoiced over his disappearance.

The shoulders of the absent are broad, and many a fraud was laid upon those of Mr. Seaton that others must have shared had he 'remained at his post' and faced the worst 'like a man.'

In various parts of the kingdom widows and orphans clamoured for vengeance; but they had to partake of poverty without that condiment, and probably in the long run digested their bitter meal as well as if he had been stood in the public pillory for their gratification.

Not a creature was much the worse because of his absence except Mr. Harriman, and with one mind therefore the wise public decided he was an accomplice, the worse criminal perhaps of the two. He stuck to his guns, and people wondered he was not ashamed of himself. He made himself active in endeavouring to trace the missing man, and universal opinion decided he had been well paid to preserve the secret. He had lost everything, and proved the loss by figures; whereupon the wise men of Gotham said, 'Figures could be so manipulated as to prove anything,' and the loss, if he sustained any, had been made up to him in other ways.

What a to-do there was for a time in Palace Gardens as well as in Throgmorton-street! As nothing was in settlement, the trustees in bankruptcy and the lawyers worked their will amongst the goods and chattels the great man had gathered together.

That they were somewhat disappointed by the result of their capture goes perhaps without saying. Persons like Mr. Seaton go in more for show than for intrinsic worth. The furniture had cost a large amount, it is true; but furniture once used is after

all but second-hand, whereas a good picture is value until its canvas hangs in tatters, ay, and after.

An old master, however, no matter how valuable, would not have served Mr. Seaton's end so well as a suite of chairs, sofa, and ottoman upholstered in silk. He had kept open house in order to maintain his credit, and nothing which failed to minister to that end could be found in it.

To decorators, upholsterers, the makers of mirrors, the inventors of parquet, and the sellers of carpets he had been a liberal patron. Turn where he pleased in Holyrood House, which was the modest name of the desirable residence in Palace Gardens, he could scarcely fail to see his own reflection in some looking-glass; go where he would his eyes were gladdened with the sight of some entirely new effect in ornament. Now he wandered through what might have been a Moorish interior; from that he passed into a book-room decorated in the style of the Middle Ages. The conservatory resembled a square cut out of the corridor of the Crystal Palace, and the dining-room could only be likened to the Egyptian Court in the same building. As for the drawing-room, it at once combined all styles and defied definition of any. Its windows opened on to a broad terrace, such as is sometimes presented to view on the stage; below that a small and pretty garden bordered and sheltered by great elm-trees; beyond that an iron railing divided a paddock-like enclosure in Kensington Gardens from the 'grounds' of Holyrood House; and further off still were to be seen the dark yews and oaks that are historical in the annals of the old comfortable-looking palace where our present Queen was born, and many

another king and queen lived and died.

Mrs. Seaton had left Palace Gardens long ere the things came to be ticketed. Indeed, as she went almost immediately after the disappearance of her husband, strangers going through the house said it did not look like a place where there had been such a shipwreck, but rather like a mansion waiting the return of the family.

After a time the servants departed also, making a noise and confusion ere they scattered abroad, such as bees indulge in when they swarm.

Before their final exodus they were much given to feel 'cold shivers' and to 'expect to meet master sudden.' His portrait in the library 'upset them,' and a few of his belongings which a housemaid turned out of a drawer in the bookcase 'gave her quite a turn.'

When the time for the auction arrived the house would have been overrun with the curious and the indignant had the ruling powers not decided to charge five shillings each for catalogues, and without a catalogue no one was admitted to view. Every article in the house was arranged and lotted; the mirrors were taken down from the mantelpieces and the curtains from the windows. Mr. Seaton himself was propped up against a pile of books, and surveyed the bidders blandly from his costly frame.

Everything was sold; from the croquet set to the carriage-horses, from the oldest saucepan in the kitchen to the billiard-table; every article was put up, bidden for, knocked down, and carted away.

It was not known who secured Mr. Seaton: the competition for his presentment was by no means so spirited as that for his person had been, but even that went, carried off speedily and securely

in a cab; and finally not a thing was left about or on the premises save a few broken flower-pots, a battered tin kettle no one would take at any price, a black cat who had certainly not brought her late owner any of that good luck which is supposed to follow the footsteps of the negro portion of the feline species, and the fixtures, which of course remained in their accustomed places.

The board in front which stated the desirable mansion was to be sold had been put up long before, and all having been done in the way of dismantling the place and making it look forsaken and forlorn that could be done, the last man to remain in the house took his departure from it on a melancholy evening towards the end of the September of 1866, and left the residence in charge of an old woman whose profession it was to look after family residences, and who told a young clerk who questioned her upon the subject she never felt afraid in a house, was it ever so big, 'because, sir, —lor bless you! —I ain't worth a-murdering.'

Holyrood House did not go off as easily as its former owner; on the contrary, it hung on hand for an unconscionable period.

Times were bad, though not so bad as some of us have since known them. Money was scarce, as money always is when people who own it are afraid of investing in any security that can be offered. City people perhaps felt shy of living where so much notoriety had been compassed. West-end folks thought possibly the sort of celebrity which hung about the house was not precisely of that description which made it quite a desirable residence.

Anyhow, let the reason be what it would, though plenty of persons went to view no one re-

mained to buy. The moss began to grow on the drive, the paint to peel from the doors, the windows to acquire a more glassy stare, and still it remained vacant.

'It was not everybody's house.' So the caretaker remarked confidentially to her friends when they came to take tea with her on Sunday afternoons, and walk in the evenings up and down the terrace, and stroll through the gardens which once incipient and quondam lord mayors and aldermen and great financiers, to say nothing of such western rank and fashion as Mr. Seaton could seduce into accepting his invitations, had honoured with their presence. 'It is not everybody's house;' which was a most true observation.

A worse misfortune, however, seemed involved, and it was to this perhaps the ancient dame referred. Not merely was the place not everybody's, but nobody wanted it.

'Lor', it might never be let,' she said, and the result seemed as though the speaker's hopes were going to prove correct.

Years passed away, and the house remained tenantless. It had been put up at the Mart, and there was not a bidder; it had been upon the books of the auctioneers till they grew ashamed of seeing it there. The trustee had almost forgotten such a residence was in existence, and if the firm of solicitors who held the legal portion of 'Seaton's estate' in charge had been similarly oblivious, the family mansion might have remained vacant until this present hour, and 'The Mystery in Palace Gardens' could never have been written.

CHAPTER II.

TO LOOK OVER THE HOUSE.

A RAW ungenial afternoon, the empty house in Palace Gardens, the only empty house in those Gardens, looking more miserable and forlorn than it had ever looked even when the snow was upon the ground, or a rapid thaw rotting the paths of its once trim garden. The leaves of the elm-trees dropping to the earth and making in the silence a noise as though they were matters of importance. The evening shadows beginning to draw in, the oaks and yews in Kensington Gardens darker than usual under the lowering sky, and seeming to have grouped themselves closer together so as to stand more aloof from the untenanted mansion, a solitary horse grazing in the paddock-like piece of ground behind the garden of Holyrood House, the board which stated 'This desirable,' &c., creaking a little, as if it had rheumatism and were complaining of such long and useless exposure to the weather. Not a living soul to be seen either up or down the avenue leading from Notting Hill-road to Kensington High-street; if any one had wanted to see a residence at its worst and wretchedest, then that person should have asked to view Mr. Seaton's former abode in Palace Gardens on the day and at the hour in question.

Mrs. Hemans, the caretaker, who had nothing in common with another Mrs. Hemans known to the lovers of sentimental and melancholy poetry, 'except the name,' as she herself would have said, had just 'wet her tea' and set it to brew on the falling bars of the kitchen range, and commenced toasting a herring for a 'relish,' when there came a rap at the front door, a rap loud and long,

which echoed through the empty house, and woke echoes in the deserted rooms.

'There now,' soliloquised the prosaic lady, putting her bloater into the oven and so removing one temptation out of her cat's path. 'Isn't that always the way? Can I ever sit down to a meal comfortable? Who'd ha' thought anybody who could stop in-doors a day like this would come out house-hunting! Drat 'em, I say; drat 'em, whoever they may be.'

And thus sociably conversing with the only person who never disagreed with her opinions, Mrs. Hemans dragged her rheumatic limbs—she, like the board, being afflicted with that complaint—up into the hall and opened the front door.

On the step there stood two persons, an elderly gentleman and a middle-aged lady. He spare, upright, gray-haired, hard-featured; she inclined to *embonpoint*, dressed plainly ('dowdily, I call it,' criticised Mrs. Hemans inaudibly), and with face so concealed by a veil tightly drawn over it and tied behind her bonnet that no one could have told whether she was handsome or plain, a whilom beauty or a present fright.

It was the gentleman who spoke.

'Can we see the house?' he asked; 'we have not an order, but you perhaps know the name of this gentleman.' And he handed her a visiting card belonging to one of the partners in the firm of solicitors who had pocketed many six-and-eightpences in the matter of Valentine Seaton, a bankrupt.

Mrs. Hemans took the card and courtesied. She laid it, without glancing at the name or address, upon the table in the hall where there stood a basket quite full of orders to view, visiting cards, notes requesting care-

taker to admit bearer, and old envelopes and leaves torn out of pocket-books, whereon the house-hunter or the curious idler had written down his own signature or any other signature which at the moment occurred to him.

In good truth Mrs. Hemans was more than willing to admit any one—providing he did not come at meal-times—whose appearance suggested the donation of a shilling. It was not so much trouble opening the windows, and 'a shilling is a shilling,' said the old crone oracularly.

At first there had been a hard-and-fast line laid down that no one should be permitted to view who did not bring an order from the auctioneers; but that rule had been gradually relaxed, and now any 'likely' person could wander at will over the house where Mr. Seaton once lived royally.

'That is quite enough, sir,' said Mrs. Hemans, closing the door behind the latest comers. 'It is getting rather dark, sir, but perhaps you will be able to see the best of the rooms.'

The gentleman answered courteously enough that he had no doubt but they would, and then turning to the lady remarked in that stage tone which almost all persons who are looking over a strange house unconsciously assume:

'Good hall.'

The lady did not answer him either in a stage tone or in any other; instead she walked straight across to the glass doors through which a pleasant view of Kensington Gardens was to be obtained, and looked out.

The gentleman followed her.

'It is allowed to be a beautiful terrace, ma'am,' said Mrs. Hemans, waxing genial. She had quite decided these people were not intending to take the house, and

she grew eloquent concerning its beauties accordingly.

If she had been deaf and dumb the lady could not have taken less notice of Mrs. Hemans's remark than was the case; indeed, as the caretaker afterwards said, 'If he had not talked there would scarce have been a word spoken.' He was affable enough; though grave looking and serious in manner, he had, so Mrs. Hemans declared, 'a pleasant way with him, and was a gentleman anybody might have took to.'

As for the lady, she was 'igh and 'aughty,' if Mrs. Hemans had ever seen a lady who was 'igh and 'aughty;' she flounced here and she flounced there, and she swept out on the terrace and back into the conservatory, and said,

'How many do you suppose these rooms would hold, Sir John?'

Sir John! Mrs. Hemans confessed afterwards she was astonished. Sirs coming on foot just like beggars in the street and ladies in old gowns and heads tied up as if they had toothache!

They ascended the principal staircase and looked into the bedrooms, and they proceeded to the next story and examined it. My lady asked about the stables, and Sir John made inquiries concerning the kitchens. My lady wanted to know if there was a private entrance into Kensington Gardens, and Sir John went out to look at the small hot-house in the further corner next the paddock.

'The place is not grand enough for her,' thought Mrs. Hemans, watching the lady as she swept once more over the ground-floor apartments and marvelled discontentedly why they were so few. 'I wonder what she wants—Buckingham Palace likely.'

Sir John went down into the basement, but my lady said she did not want to see the kitchens.

'I sha'n't have to live in them,' she added, with a toss of her head; and she passed through one of the long French windows that opened on to the terrace, and walked up and down there, up and down, while Mrs. Hemans showed Sir John the lower portion of the house.

Often Mrs. Hemans declared afterwards she could not get the thought of the lady off her mind.

'There—I never *did* see anything so ghostly-like as she looked out there walking past the windows in the twilight, herself appearing black from head to foot, and the veil tied down on her face like a mask. I had not a bit of appetite for my tea, which was brewed as black as ink. I was glad when I shut the door behind them, though the gentleman he did give me half-a-crown. She did not give anything; not even "Good afternoon."

The days came and the days went; a few persons straggled in to view the desirable residence, but my lady did not reappear, and Mrs. Hemans had quite decided she as good as held a lease of the house for another five years, when one bright morning in December Sir John, accompanied by a bright pretty-looking young girl, knocked at the door, and asked if he might go through the rooms again.

'You need not come with us,' he said to Mrs. Hemans. 'I can find my way quite well, thank you.'

The girl did not speak, but she smiled pleasantly at the old caretaker, who went slowly downstairs feeling much exercised in her mind.

'It has a bad look,' she thought; 'but lor', nothing may come of it. I have known folks come back four, five, six times, and never take a place after all. If they do take it, though, I should like to

be told what I am to do, that's what I want to know. I am sure I never can feel as much at home and as settled anywhere else.'

Meanwhile, Sir John and the young lady had made a tour of the premises, walked round the garden, paced the terrace, leant over the railings dividing Holyrood House from Kensington Gardens, admired the conservatory, decided that a very good ball might be given in the drawing-room, criticised the decorations, inspected the library, entered all the bed-chambers, and ascended slowly from story to story, talking as they went.

On the top floor there was a large bedroom, the windows of which commanded a fine view over Kensington Gardens. One of these windows had been opened in the morning by Mrs. Hemans to let in the crisp air, and the girl went over to it, and leaning on the sash looked wistfully out upon the peaceful landscape.

'It is very nice, papa,' she said, as Sir John came close beside her. 'It is so still and tranquil. No one would imagine we were in the middle of London.'

'Hardly in the middle,' he answered.

'Well, you know what I mean,' she went on; 'we are really in a great town, and yet we might, so far as noise is concerned, be a hundred miles in the country.'

'I wish we were, Rachel.'

'It is a pity you cannot live where you like, papa.'

'I mean to try and like this house very much when we come to live in it,' he answered cheerfully.

'How do you propose to do that?' she asked.

'I scarcely understand you, dear.'

'Well, it is a very handsome house, I suppose, and there are plenty of reception-rooms, and

everything we can want when we invite a crowd of company; but I have been looking about everywhere, and wondering where we are to *live*. Receiving is one thing, and living another; and I cannot find a snug cosy corner anywhere.'

'What a funny child you are!'

'Child, indeed!' she echoed, with an affectation of indignation that sat prettily upon her. 'Child! I am growing quite an old woman—I am out of my teens. I am nearly one-and-twenty. If I were a great heiress I suppose people would be thinking of my coming of age. What will you give me, papa, on my next birthday?'

'I will not tell you till it comes,' he answered.

'I know what I wish you would give me now,' she said slyly.

'Have I ever refused you anything?' he asked, his eyes reflecting her smile, but his tone earnest as it was its wont to be.

'Ah, but it is never too late to mend,' she persisted.

'It must be an almost impossible request I should deny you, Rachel,' he answered; and there was a look on his face which told that somewhere he hid away a trouble, that behind the ready and kindly smile there lay the shadow of some bitter sorrow.

'It is not at all impossible; you can say "Yes" quite easily.'

'Let me hear this great petition, then, Rachel; what do you want me to do?'

'I want you to give me this room for my very own; I should like to have it. I think I could *live* up here, and when you were very good you might live here too. Will you let me keep it?'

'Your mamma, dear, may wish—' he was beginning, but she cut across his sentence ruthlessly.

'I will give it up instantly if she objects, but I do not think

she will. I want *you* to give your consent; you, sir, do you hear? for you always make such a fuss about my having the best of everything in the house that I am afraid you will be giving me some of those dreadful rooms down-stairs. I can't bear having doors opening all about me; I like to shut mine and feel cosy. See, if you give me this room, I will put a huge screen, or perhaps two, across, and so divide it. I will place my easel here, and my work-table there, and get a little pianino and stand it against the wall, and be as snug up here as possible, out of the way of everybody.'

'Arrange it just as you like, dear,' he agreed. 'I should, of course, prefer your having more suitable apartments, but really, as you say, the house is inconvenient for living in.'

'If you think so I would not take it, papa,' she exclaimed.

'I do not spend such an amount of time at home as to render my own tastes and distastes matters worth much consideration.'

'But it will not be always so,' said the girl eagerly. 'You must give up going into that dreadful City some day, and then you ought to have a nice place somewhere away in a pretty part of the country.'

'I shall never have a nice place in the country,' he answered decidedly.

'Why not? you know you would like it of all things.'

'Perhaps so; but you know, Rachel, your mamma would not like it at all. I asked her as we walked down into Kensington High-street after looking over this house if she thought she would prefer it to Otterbrook Park. I really thought of buying that property, and she said,—she did not think, she was sure—she declared nothing on earth should

ever induce her voluntarily to live out of London. That of course settled the matter. I shall never reopen the question.'

He spoke gravely, but not bitterly. There was no trace of irritation in his voice, or any evidence in his manner of regret that he had been compelled to forego his own wishes. It was just as though he had spoken of the choice of two roads, either of which he was willing to travel, for neither of which he had any special predilection, and perhaps he did feel almost indifferent.

Looking at him for a moment Rachel's face clouded, and she laid her hand gently on his arm as if to give some unspoken comfort which she felt was needed.

Involuntarily he seemed to shrink from the light touch as though it pained him; and perhaps the girl felt this, for she drew it gently away.

Instantly he caught it in both of his and held it fast. Consciously he would not have wounded or slighted that tender heart, let his own suffer as it might.

'Arrange about the room as you please, dear,' he said with business-like composure; 'it certainly has a pretty look-out. You must let me know in good time how you would like it furnished, that it may be done up nicely for you; or will you choose the upholstery for yourself?'

There had been tears in her eyes not a minute before, but now she broke out laughing.

'Do you fancy I am going to turn extravagant in my old age?' she asked; 'do you think you won't have furniture enough on your brain without my adding to the trouble? No; now you have given me the room you must leave me to put just what I like in it. I couldn't part with all my old friends, I could not really. Except

the screen, which I know where to get, and the little piano and an easy chair for you—a very easy chair for you, sir—when you are disposed to be lazy and sociable, I will have nothing new. When you come up here you can forget you are in Palace Gardens; we can make believe we are back in the dear old den at Islington; that was the nicest house we ever had. Do you remember those breakneck stairs, and the unexpected steps, and the queer little rooms, and the delightful window-seats where I read all my fairy tales, and the endless cupboards, and the twisting twirling passages? O papa, *why* did you ever leave it? We shall never get such pears and peaches again as grew in that garden. And that mulberry tree! It was a sin to forsake such a place.'

Sir John laughed.

'You forget, dear, that it forsook me. It would not have me any longer at any price. It is all pulled down, and a street cut through the garden, and the mulberry-tree fallen under the axe, and the pears and peaches grubbed up, and a staring new terrace built on the ground which the old house covered. It was a nice house, Rachel, but I am afraid no one would think so except two such old fogies as we are,' and he stroked her fair young face lovingly as he uttered those words, and drew her hand within his arm while he led her from the room.

As they descended from floor to floor they looked once again into the several apartments, and walked at length from the boudoir on to the terrace.

'We shall have to give a house-warming, I suppose,' said the girl thoughtfully as they walked.

'I suppose so,' answered her father, and he sighed more deeply,

perhaps, though not so loudly as Mrs. Hemans, who had been thinking her thoughts in the kitchen, and found that she was growing very anxious indeed.

'I don't like the look on it,' she argued; 'they have been here an hour and more, and people never stop like that if they have not *some* notion of a place. What I want to know is, where I am to go—nothing may come of it after all; but still they may buy the house. I suppose all houses are bought some time, though I did think this one would never go off. I hoped it would stay empty my time, at any rate.'

She hovered uneasily about the basement staircase and the neighbourhood of the back hall, and hearing the visitors at length preparing to depart, met them as they came in from the terrace.

'I beg pardon, sir,' she said apologetically, 'but would you please to leave your card? The "gentlemen" always likes to know the name of the gentlefolks as call to look over the house.'

'They know mine,' was the answer, 'for I have been to them frequently about the matter. However, there is my card,' and he gave that and another half-crown to the old woman, who felt that the worst had come, that already the bitterness of death was past.

The young lady said 'good-morning,' and again smiled pleasantly upon the caretaker as she passed out; but Mrs. Hemans felt incapable of response.

She tried to answer, but the words seemed to stick in her throat. She had feared the blow, and yet now when it fell it found her unprepared.

'Been to the gentlemen, has he?' she thought as she watched the pair walk down the carriage-sweep together. 'I suppose it is all as good as settled, then. I wish I had told them the first evening

about the damp in the house-keeper's room, and the rats in the larder—but there! I don't suppose it would have made a pin of difference. What do such as they care about damp, or rats, or what becomes of such as me? I should not have minded so much the first four months, but now I have got used to the place, and the place has got used to me;’ and so lamenting that her occupancy of about forty rooms, only one of which she ever used, was drawing to a close, Mrs. Hemans shut the hall-door and turned back into the empty house.

She went down into the kitchen and stood for a minute in silent woe beside the dresser, still unconsciously holding in her hand the card with which the owner apparent had presented her. All at once her eyes fell upon it, and turning it over, she read,

‘SIR JOHN H. MOFFAT,
Carlton Hill.’

‘Well, you do not look much to be a Sir John,’ she muttered disparagingly. ‘I wonder who you are and what you are; but it cannot make any difference to me, when once I have to leave my comfortable home, and go out into the world.’

As the managing partner in the firm of auctioneers she vaguely styled ‘the gentlemen’ said to her when the question of her final departure was being settled,

‘The fact is, Mrs. Hemans, you lived so long in the house, you thought you were going to stop in it for ever.’

CHAPTER III.

THE NEW TENANT.

UPON the whole, those who were interested in Holyrood House, and those who interested themselves in the subject, felt well satisfied

that the long-vacant residence should pass into the possession of Sir John Moffat.

The trustees were pleased, naturally, to get the purchase money; the solicitors were pleased because they were enabled to run up another nice little bill of costs; the auctioneers were pleased, for they at length received their commission, so long, to their thinking, overdue; and the creditors were pleased, as it seemed possible they might get some small share of the amount paid in hard cash by Sir John.

As regards other persons—the outside world—the multitude who had not the slightest occasion to busy themselves about the matter, they rejoiced exceedingly. Those who felt their own hold upon prosperity to be eminently insecure were glad to see one scarecrow removed out of their sight. To them there had been a terror, and yet a fearful fascination, about the empty house. It seemed a matter for rejoicing, that henceforth the place where such a downfall had been witnessed was to be inhabited by a perfectly solvent man.

Concerning Sir John's position, there could be no question. He had not made his money by any commercial *coup d'état*, by any juggling, or rigging, or finessing. It was well known where he came from, who he was, where he had been born, how he climbed from height to height, and grew in favour with all those grave and notable persons in the City whose favour is worth having.

Scandal had never touched him. Envy herself could pick no flaw in his character. Of him not a man in London could say he was gluttonous or a wine-bibber; those who had dealings with his firm were unanimous in saying their word was their bond, and that

they would rather trust John Moffat's yea and nay than another person's solemn oath.

Generally there is another side to such a reputation—one on which writers of fiction are somewhat fond of enlarging; but, in this case, the picture might have been reversed and the canvas revealed without compunction and without fear. Simply, in himself Sir John Moffat was exactly what he appeared to the world—an honest honourable gentleman, who had made his money fairly and hardly, who entertained a high idea of the responsibility of riches, who believed he should be held answerable for all the talents intrusted to him, who had a most tender conscience and a child-like heart, who, when he had done wrong, rested not by day, thinking how he might repair his error or make atonement for it; who, educated the strictest of Calvinists, and holding sin in the most deadly abhorrence, was yet merciful even in his thoughts towards those who went wrong, knowing that sometimes the sturdiest soldier may drop out of the ranks, the bravest sailor make a mistake which shall shipwreck the whole of his after life.

Not to the possession of 'City influence,' or to any of those adventitious aids which often push a very commonplace person up the heights of fortune, did Sir John owe his worldly success and the respect in which his fellows held him.

That he had done well, and that he was regarded with the highest esteem, was due entirely to the weight and worth of his own character. Though he did not possess the great modern advantage of coming out of a gutter, or rising from the sweeping of offices to the ownership of them, he had worked very hard indeed

at his business. He came to it early and left it late; he did not waste either his health or his money in the pursuit of pleasure, he did not leave to subordinates the conduct of transactions requiring thought and caution. Different from Mr. Seaton, all his commercial transactions were entered upon soberly and carried on quietly. His offices were plainly furnished, and their appearance was unobtrusive. While getting on in the world he kept no carriage, or riding horse, or expensive bachelor establishment. He lived in accustomed lodgings, and generally walked to and from the City; in his personal habits he was economical, and he had no luxurious or gluttonous tastes. If he looked forward in those days to any future, which might hold a greater happiness than his present supplied, it was that, at some period, he would perhaps be able to purchase a small estate in the country, and retire there with a competence and a pretty wife; but he had then no special estate in his mind's eye, was uncertain as to the exact amount competence should represent, and felt that the pretty wife must as yet be considered as vague a quantity as the special shire in which the house and land he meant hereafter to buy were situated.

When at length he did take a wife and settle down, both of which events happened much sooner than he intended, he lived even more quietly than before his marriage.

He found, in the then suburb of Islington, an old-fashioned red-brick house with a fine garden, where he located himself and his belongings and resided for ten years. During the whole of that time, it might be said, he saw no company, and did not seek to make acquaintances. His wife

knew a few—a very few people in the neighbourhood, and sometimes paid a morning call, and sometimes went out to tea; but of visiting, in the ordinary sense of the word, the Moffats were guiltless. Each year Mrs. Moffat, the children, and the servants went off to the sea; sometimes it was Lowestoft, sometimes Brighton, sometimes Torquay, sometimes Margate; but it was never any of the watering-places upon the west coast.

There Mr. Moffat proceeded by himself. He had relations in Lancashire, who could not, Mrs. Moffat's few acquaintances thought, have approved of his choice, for he never took his wife with him when he went to see them, and never asked them to his house. Moreover, he did not take the children down for their grandfather and grandmother to make much of, and he seemed as little proud of his handsome sons as a parent could well be.

In the household it was no secret that 'master and missus' had their differences.

They did not quarrel—at least he did not quarrel—but they were not of one mind. He went one way, she another. She was not an easy lady to serve, the servants asserted; and as time went on the idea somehow got abroad, fostered by her own exceeding disagreeableness, that she had been above her husband in rank, and only married him for his money.

'She does not care one straw about him,' the domestic detectives decided. 'If he were to be carried home dead some day, she would not shed a tear.'

It was perfectly true; she did not care for her husband in the very least; but she possessed the negative virtue or active vice—which may it best be called?—of caring for no one else.

Of all scandal of that sort the house was perfectly clear. Whatever the cause of the coolness—and a coolness there undoubtedly was—it had nothing to do with undue fondness for any one, male or female.

Mr. Moffat could leave his home and wife with feelings of the most perfect security.

Living a life of such unusual retirement, and working hard at a business which proved more than ordinarily remunerative, Mr. Moffat found himself eventually not merely a rich, but a very rich, man; and when at the death of his father he inherited the bulk of a large fortune, he could have retired altogether from City anxieties upon a handsome income.

How much he was worth his wife did not know, and she might never have had an accurate idea of his wealth if he had been able to renew his lease of the house at Islington.

Not succeeding in this, however, it became necessary for him to shift his quarters; and under the delusion perhaps that he could lead the existence which seemed best to please him in one place as well as another, pitched his tent at Carlton Hill.

There honours were thrust upon him; there his wife finally made up her mind that she was the most ill-used woman in the whole world; there very plain words passed between the pair, and the first step into society was taken, which drew the husband and wife by almost insensible degrees into the vortex of fashionable life.

During the time of the distress in Lancashire, Mr. Moffat, unknown to his wife, had taken a prominent and distinguished part in alleviating some portion of the misery which was then endured by the manufacturing population.

He put his hand in his own purse freely, and money was put freely into his hands by others, who knew how ably all funds intrusted to him were administered. In charity, as in business, he left nothing to subordinates he thought he could do better himself; and while the cotton famine lasted he was in Lancashire almost continually, travelling there, investigating here, finding out cases of bitter poverty, helping all those who were willing to help themselves, pitiful to the weak, sympathetic with the strong who stood compulsorily idle, an assistance to those who, while anxious to assist, seemed bewildered at the extent of the assistance required.

He was never idle, never tired; his resources seemed almost inexhaustible, and yet so quiet and so modest was he withal, that not one of his colleagues but felt something ought publicly to be done to show that the whole country appreciated his efforts.

Amongst others, a certain nobleman, possessed of large political influence, was so strongly imbued with this feeling, that he worked unceasingly to obtain due recognition of his services; and when he felt almost certain his request was in the way of being complied with, mooted the matter to Mr. Moffat, then stopping in Lancashire.

To his astonishment Mr. Moffat instantly, and almost peremptorily, declined the proffered honour.

'For the little I was permitted to accomplish,' he said, 'I thought of no reward, and I will take none. I appreciate your kindness, my lord; but the greatest kindness you can show so humble an individual as myself is to permit me to remain in obscurity.'

If he had desired a recognition of his services most probably he would have been suffered to go to his grave without any being pro-

posed; but as matters stood, people refused to be satisfied.

So long as he lived quietly at Islington it might have been imagined his income would not warrant the assumption of any fresh dignity, and that he had good reasons for refusing the baronetage pressed upon him; but once he left that retirement, and went even so far out into the world as Carlton Hill, the world began to realise the fact that he was a very rich man, who could not, and should not, be permitted to please himself.

'Live like a hermit—pooh!' said wealthy gentlemen who knew him on 'Change, and were aware he had gone to a house near Regent's Park. 'You have remained buried far too long. Now that you are in our neighbourhood we shall not permit you to stand aloof from all of us; you must come and dine. Name an early day. Now we cannot take any refusal.'

But Mr. Moffat did give a refusal, and successive speakers had to take it. He was quite firm. He said he never was much of a visiting man, and he never could become one. Business was quite enough change for him; he had no aptitude for mixing in general society. He was a quiet person, who liked quiet ways.

Repulsed in front, the enemy attacked him in flank. Unable to conquer Mr. Moffat, the besieging party bethought them their wives might seduce Mrs. Moffat.

'Unless she is an exception to all rules, she must like to go into society,' said the ladies, preparing to win victory.

Mrs. Moffat was an exception to almost all rules, nevertheless she was fond of visiting.

'She would accept their invitations,' she said, 'willingly, but she could not answer for Mr.

Moffat ;' and then, as with one voice, the fair temptresses begged of her not to trouble herself about her husband.

'If you come,' they declared, 'he is sure to follow,' and the result proved the justice of their argument. Mrs. Moffat came, and Mr. Moffat followed ; and then society was delighted and thought it had done a very clever thing, and that it had performed a 'really charitable action when it drew those people out of their shell.'

'What can Mr. Moffat be thinking about !' the ladies cried. 'He has a daughter growing up, and sons getting on, and another daughter still ; and how can he expect the girls to marry or the boys to make a figure in the world if they never see any one and never go anywhere ? Mrs. Moffat, I am sure, seems quite *rusty* with the solitary existence she has led. She says herself she feels almost bewildered when she gets amongst a number of guests.'

'I fancy she has been some poor great man's daughter that Moffat met when she was quite young,' said one individual, speculating about the lady, as indeed every one did who spoke to her. 'Well born and without a sixpence most likely, living in utter retirement, and then Moffat no doubt came by with his money-bags. She seems to me as if she had never been anywhere, or seen anything in her life ; but is not she handsome ? What must she not have been in the way of beauty when she was a girl !'

Certainly there did seem to be a mystery about Mrs. Moffat. She never spoke of her early life ; never said where she was born, or by whom educated ; had never a word to say concerning father or mother, brother or sister, or the friends of her childhood and the companions of her girlish days.

She was not a Londoner—some clever questioner extracted so much ; but beyond that fact no one could get. She might have come from some island mentioned in no chart, for any information that was elicited from her.

As for trying to pump the children, that was worse than useless ; it was irritating ; they knew nothing, literally nothing, of their mamma's relations and antecedents. No old servant had there ever been attached to the family to tell them anything of their mother's early days ; her beauty ; the gentlemen who were crazy for love of her ; the way their papa met her.

They had never been down to any grand place in the country which had once belonged to her people ; they knew nothing of any field-marshal, or admirals, or bishops, or deans, or lords, or celebrated commoners, whose names were preserved in the family archives, and with whom mamma claimed kindred ; they had never heard anything about their mamma's mamma or papa ; they could tell nothing, for they knew nothing. If secrecy concerning her antecedents were desired by Mrs. Moffat she had taken an admirable method to insure it, for children no more than grown-up people can talk of things concerning which they are totally ignorant.

In sober earnest, if Mrs. Moffat had appeared in London as suddenly as Mr. Seaton had disappeared from its midst, less could not have been known or found out as regards her origin.

That she was not clever or accomplished her visitors soon discovered ; but they found she had a temper which made up for all deficiencies of culture and education. A haughty defiant temper, that would have swept down, or

by, or over any obstacle which came in her way ; a restless ambition ; a discontented dissatisfied nature ; and a heart colder than ice.

Here were the elements of sufficient domestic misery, and yet the household at Carlton Hill could not have been described as thoroughly wretched.

Husband and wife seemed to go on their separate ways with as little dissension as might be.

Mr. Moffat did not interfere with the conduct of the house, or with Mrs. Moffat's *penchant* for society. He went to the City as he had always done. She began to visit a great deal, which she had never done. The same daily governess who was engaged for the girls when they lived at Islington still continued to teach them after the removal to Carlton Hill. They had masters, and were well taught ; and the eldest daughter made good use of her opportunities, and learned rapidly and well.

The boys were sent to school, and, consequently, if Mrs. Moffat had ever recognised the claims of domestic duties, she must have found them considerably curtailed.

Literally from morning to night she had nothing to do except dress, drive, visit, and receive visitors. It was a life she took to kindly for a time, and comparative peace reigned in the household until that question of the baronetage was raised over again, and this time, unhappily, in Mrs. Moffat's hearing.

She had never heard a word of it before. Her advice had never been asked, her opinion never taken. Long, long previously her husband had declined the honour, and hoped and believed the subject could not be revived ; but friends were officious, and acquaintances troublesome.

'Why should he not be a baro-

net ?' It would be nice, they all felt, to call him Sir John, and the ball was accordingly set rolling again, with the result that, for the second time, Mr. Moffat was sounded on the subject and found to be as firm in his refusal as ever.

'But, my good sir, only consider,' urged a gentleman, who would have undertaken to convince any one of the error of his ways. 'Think what you are throwing away—position, influence, distinction. You are not merely refusing all these for yourself, but you are flinging them away out of the reach of your children. In the interests of your eldest son I doubt greatly whether you have a right to decline a title so gracefully offered.'

'I do not doubt at all,' answered Mr. Moffat. 'I have said before, and I can only repeat my words, that no inducement you could hold out would tempt me to accept this offer.'

'But why ?' persisted his official friend.

'Am I bound to give my reasons ?' asked Mr. Moffat.

'Well, no ; I won't go so far as that, yet still—'

'Cannot you see,' interposed another gentleman, 'that our friend is of the opinion of the individual who said, when offered a similar honour, "May I entreat the king to commute the sentence to knighthood, so that the disgrace may die with me" ? There was another Irishman, who, one morning, rode forty miles after the knighting Lord-Lieutenant to ask him to undo the evil he had done in his cups, and remove the Sir from before his name.'

There was an awkward pause. Sometimes an anecdote holds within its tortuous twists some truth which never appears bitter till told under special circumstances to some particular man.

Mr. Moffat broke the silence.

'I thank you,' he said gravely; 'you have exactly expressed my feelings, only much better than I could have expressed them myself.'

'You cannot be serious.'

'I am perfectly serious. If I were to accept a baronetage I should feel it my duty to set aside a large portion of all I possessed for the benefit of the baronet who should come after me, and I do not feel inclined to do anything of the kind. Amongst many other reasons that is one for my decision.'

'Do you mean you intend to refuse this honour?' asked Mrs. Moffat breathlessly.

'I have already done so, more than once,' he explained.

'Then it is a shame,' she broke out. 'If you have no consideration for me, you ought to have for the children. What has Philip done, poor boy, that you snatch this chance from him? What have I done that you will not give me rank and standing when the opportunity presents itself.'

Mr. Moffat did not answer her in words, but he looked at her steadily.

'I think you have not considered the subject in all its bearings,' he remarked after an uncomfortable pause, and there was a significance in his tone, as there had been in his glance, which did not escape the notice of one man at all events who was present.

'I wonder what there is wrong in the house,' he marvelled, as he strolled down the Edgware-road. 'She is not easily stopped when once she gets the bit between her teeth; but he pulled her up in a second. Nobody would imagine Moffat had so firm a hand.'

A few days after, some one told him 'Moffat was going to be knighted.'

'He consents to what he considers the lesser evil,' said this

gentleman, laughing. 'Queer fellow, isn't he?'

'My lady wins,' thought the other. 'At last she has been given and has taken half a loaf upon the principle of that being better than no bread.'

Yes, my lady won; she wanted the title and he gave her that; when she desired the house in Palace Gardens he got her that. She had to fight for both a little, but the subsequent possession seemed sweeter for the struggle.

'What *can* your fancy be for living in Palace Gardens?' said Sir John wonderingly.

Over dinner a few days previously a member of the firm of solicitors who still held the Seaton estate in trust had been talking about the place, and remarked,

'Now that would be just the house for you, Sir John, and you might have it for an old song. If you made anything of an offer I know we could accept it.'

'That is an offer you are not very likely to receive from me,' answered Sir John; but he reckoned without his host.

My lady had her clique of associates, and with one consent they all began, when she mentioned the place, to sing the praises of Palace Gardens.

'Dear Lady Moffat ought certainly to live there. Sir John should be compelled to buy the house.'

'Why, such a chance might never occur again. Positively, my dear, he must be mad—stark staring mad even to think of letting such an opportunity slip through his fingers.'

'I know the house perfectly. What a place it is! Perfect, my dear, simply perfect; the very rooms for company; certainly you must go there. I can only say it would be *wicked* of you to let any one else get it; and with your

girls growing up too! Why, Rachel must be over twenty, and she is neither married nor engaged.'

'And with all my heart and soul I hope she never may be,' said Sir John, when his wife repeated this amongst many other utterances to him.

'Why should she not?' asked Lady Moffat, turning upon him furiously. 'There is no reason she should be ashamed of her father, I suppose?'

Sir John said nothing; but he looked at her fixedly with the look which had before attracted the notice of more than one.

'Do you mean she has reason to be ashamed of me?' demanded Lady Moffat, answering that look with eyes that never sank under her husband's gaze.

'I did not say that,' he replied.

'Only implied the fact.'

'Take any meaning out of my words you prefer,' he answered wearily.

'O, yea, it is all very well for you,' she was beginning, when he stopped her with a warning gesture.

'I won't have any more of this. I cannot bear it. Do not I suffer enough? Have I not suffered enough without your adding to the torture? If you have no memory, I have. If you are devoid of conscience, I am not so fortunate.' Then instantly he checked himself. 'It was wrong of me to say that,' he went on; 'I am sorry, but you try me—you try me sometimes almost more than I can bear!'

ON THE ARTISTIC TREATMENT OF A SLAP IN THE FACE.

I WAS very much struck by a leading article which appeared in the *Times* many years ago during the Second Empire, which showed a great deal of political sagacity and prescience. At the Paris elections the devoted supporters of the Empire were defeated by the Opposition candidates. 'This petted, jewelled, marbled, enriched Paris'—so said the *Times* leader, or in some such words—'has suddenly turned round and struck the Emperor a violent slap in the face.' That slap in the face was the precursor of the political volcano which broke out some seven years later, directly after the catastrophe of Sedan. I am afraid that the Emperor did not receive that political slap in the face very artistically. Otherwise he might have made a better thing out of it. In these days such slaps should be treated after an artistic fashion. Simply to give a return slap may be straightforward and vigorous, but it is excessively inartistic—coarse rough work below criticism. When a borough returned a member contrary to the wishes of its noble proprietor, that noble proprietor, in return for that slap in the face, declared, what Napoleon III. could not declare of Paris, that he would cause the grass to grow in the streets. He made the vow and kept it. He did not, however, in the long-run gain very much by the notion; for his treatment of that borough was made a very strong argument in the House of Commons for the passing of the Reform Bill.

A slap in the face is a very unpleasant infliction. It makes the nerves tingle, the cheeks to burn, and the eyes to dance. It is a shock to the nervous system generally. It is only physically administered—judiciously or injudiciously—to very young people. I generally hold out to them *in terrorem* the fate of that unfortunate young pig who was put to death because he had too much cheek. It is the cheeky individual, the puffed-up person, who seems to invite and almost to constrain the slap in the face. At the same time, we may be quiet and humble—only 'trust our modest worth,' as the Laureate has it—and yet be the recipients of the unmerited slap. Certain slaps in the face come to most men. Some of them may not really be intended as slaps; we are thin-skinned, and in our sensitiveness we take them to be such; but after all deductions, we witness in ourselves and others, after a metaphorical fashion, the administration of very real and resounding slaps. Your next-door neighbour, with whom you have long been on familiar terms, gives a party to the principal people of the neighbourhood, and he evidently does not consider you one of the principal people, for he passes you over. You think that your last article was decidedly brilliant, and the friendly editor slips you a private note, just to hint that you are getting prosy. You have a slight weakness for oratory, and you go to some institution of which you think your-

self 'ornament and guide,' and you make a motion, and are not fortunate enough to find even a second. You have some favourite speculation in which you put your money, and persuade other people to put their money; but, not receiving your last dividend with the customary regularity, you call at the office: you find the clerks gone, the office shut up, and the whole speculation vanished into thin air. You really think yourself good-looking, well made, and with a decidedly intellectual expression: it is not agreeable to find yourself popularly spoken of among your friends as the missing link between the gorilla and human nature. You really think that you have established bonds of sympathy between yourself and Julia; but you find that you have quite mistaken the nature of her feelings, and that your offer is declined. These are instances—and such instances might be indefinitely multiplied—of slaps in the face.

Some people retain very faithfully the recollection of the slap. They store it up carefully in retentive memory, intending to pay it off artistically, sooner or later, on the first opportunity that might offer. They grin and grimace at the time of infliction as if the slap were a mere trifle, a graceful unimportant trifle, and which in point of fact they would rather have than otherwise. A member of Parliament told me one day that he had lost 30,000*l.* in a strike. 'But it was a mere trifle,' he said. 'I did not in reality care anything about it.' But for all that he took the most effective means he could for starving down the strike. A friend of mine was good enough to explain to me his theory of the artistic treatment of a slap in the face. He was a man who told me that he greatly

admired the Satanic characteristics in Milton:

'The unconquerable will

And study of revenge, immortal hate!'

'I take my slap,' he said, 'in the most gracious manner. I grin and bear it. But I treasure up the offence for a dozen or a score of years, and when I have the opportunity I pay him off with compound interest. I am ready to murder him or ruin him.' Perfectly shocking, was it not, my dear reader, in this uncompromising heathen? And yet I think that owing a man a grudge is after all not such an unfrequent phenomenon in the world's moral or immoral life. I am told that in some great places of business there are people who keep a Black Book. They set a mark against a man's name. They decline all business communications with him, and make it a rule to do him an ill turn whenever the chance offers. Black Books and black looks are common enough all the world over. 'O, that mine adversary had written a book!' said Job; and when the book is published, the unfriendly reviewer, who may happen to have a tingling recollection of a bygone slap in the face, is sure to vilipend the writer and his book as mere offal of the dunghill. I think we sometimes hear of critics who have this notion of artistically treating a slap in the face. And if you have shown a man a hundred kindnesses, yet if, in a moment of possibly deserved irritation, you may have lent him a slap in the face, he forgets all the kindness, and only studies how he may artistically revenge the slap. There was a very charming writer, Frank Smedley, who used to write story-books, which are still immense favourites with the boy population of these realms. He had a cousin, to whom he bequeathed his large

property, Menella Smedley, one of the most kindly and gracious natures that I have ever known, and a genuine poetess. Smedley was a cripple, a defect compensated by great moral and intellectual endowments; but it was his especial delight to describe imaginary scenes of great athletic power and vigour. Some of his scenes are laid at Venice, which I think Smedley could never have visited, or he would not have described people as driving about in their carriages, which in the very nature of things could never have happened. But he makes his hero receive an insult from a noble lord, who tosses away his glove because the poor tutor had contaminated it by his touch. 'A day of reckoning.' A day of reckoning comes. 'You will observe, my lord, that this is the right-hand glove;' and then, putting it neatly on, he administers a knock-down blow. Of course I feel a thrill of British admiration when a noble lord is knocked over by a mere commoner, only in the nature of things it is just possible that the commoner might have been knocked over by the noble lord. At school we used to think it a splendid thing that 'Lewis Arundel' had given a real slap in the face in exchange for a figurative one; but though agreeable to the British character for natural brutality, I am inclined to think in maturer years that such reprisals are wanting in artistic finish.

There was a man of the highest literary fame who went down to live in a suburban neighbourhood. Now in social matters a suburban neighbourhood is a very awkward one. In London your neighbours are not those who live in the same neighbourhood, but those who live in the same clique. In the country ties of neighbourhood constitute ties of friendship. But these

suburban neighbourhoods are neither the one thing nor the other. They are neither town nor country. You are not in the way of meeting old friends or making new ones. No sensible man will go into such a locality—as a rule—unless furnished with one or two good letters of introduction. The only man sure to call upon him is the parson, who probably does so with an eye to a pew-seat or a subscription, which may be legitimate objects enough in their way. Still the stranger in question who took up his abode in this locality was a very distinguished man in his way, whom it would be a distinction to know. The grandees of the country-side did not know how to treat this new importation, and on the whole concluded that it would be judicious to ignore him. He was accordingly ignored, which some people would consider a decided slap in the face. It so happened that her gracious Majesty came into these regions, and honoured the great author with a call. The fact spread like wild-fire, and now every one of distinction hastened to leave their cards on the great man. But this gentleman had resolved to take his slap in the face after an artistic fashion. He collected all the cards, and one day drove about returning them, instead of leaving his own, at the people's houses. Now I think that there was something of an artistic treatment in this method of dealing with the social slap. It was a rebuke to our inherent Philistinism. Most of the slaps deliberately dealt out all around us are social slaps. I know a great lady who has the character of being very kind and charitable, but who in reality is as fond of administering slaps and pinches as if she were a Mother Brownrigg. She will visit the poorest and most degraded, but

she will not visit those who are just upon the skirts of her own gentility. She will not visit the untitled squire, whose smaller domain infringes on her own, or even give a friendly glance to the wife of the poor curate or struggling doctor. We should be glad to hear of such slaps being artistically treated. They probably get their deserts, though we may not 'be by to see.' The best plan is to go our way quietly and take no notice, thanking Heaven that we have not ourselves such ungentle souls. When the slap misses its aim it often recoils upon the slapper, which in itself is no inartistic style of treatment. Moreover, it is just possible—if such a supposition may be deferentially hinted at—that you may have deserved this slap in the face. You may have got off very cheap with the slap, having deserved a severe blow. If you do not take heed to the slap, you may experience the sharper treatment by and by. I believe that men often come to great grief because they have neglected light visitations. I have seen one or two young fellows get slaps in the face in my time, and they have generally brought it upon themselves by their 'tricks and their manners.' I remember the case of a young curate, who, at a luncheon, differed rather brusquely from the late Bishop Wilberforce. 'I perceive, sir,' said the great bishop, 'that you have no respect for authority.' The assembled curates shuddered at this slap administered to one of their order. A judge can often administer a slap in the face to a young barrister. If 'my lud' only reads a newspaper while he is speaking, or goes asleep while he is speaking, that is a slap in the face of a negative kind. But sometimes the slap is of a very positive kind. There are some judges who are

very skilful in snubbing some barristers. The influence of the Bench over the Bar was never more paramount than at the present time. Of course the young barrister will have to take his slap as artistically as he can, although he may endure much grief of heart and grind his teeth inwardly. Yet the slap may make him a better barrister, and possibly a judge himself in good time. A slap in the face has a wholesome tendency to take the cheek out of a man, and bring him to a proper state of mind. If we outwardly condole we are secretly gratified by the administration of such slaps. I remember a fellow who imposed upon us all by giving the idea that he was going to take splendid honours, and his ultimate fate was that he was ploughed for a simple pass. If the dandy who professes himself a lady-killer gets rejected, or the man who brags of great acquaintance is openly cut, or the man who, metaphorically, is always shaking a long purse in your face discovers a frightful leakage therein, all his dearest friends keenly appreciate the inherent satire of that slap in the face. The slap will do good where any element of goodness is left in such people. If young people are taught better manners, become more civil, tolerant, thoughtful, attentive, they will have taken their slaps, in the best sense of our phrase, in a truly artistic manner.

Indeed there have been wise people who have keenly regretted that they have not had slaps in the face in the days when such slaps might have done them good. The classical reader will remember the legend of the Ring of Poly-crates, told with such honest trust by Herodotus, translated so vividly by the late Lord Lytton from Schiller's version. Life passed so smoothly with the Prince of

Samos. Whatever he touched prospered. Such unvarying good fortune seemed simply monstrous in the view of his friend, Amasis of Egypt. Amasis thought that life ought to be a kind of trellis-work, a combination of light and shadow. Polycrates, holding such reasoning in superstitious reverence, thought that he would afflict his soul; that since nobody would give him a slap in the face, he must needs slap his own face. But the intended slap was destined not to come off. A costly ring was thrown into the sea for the purpose of 'vexing his soul;' but when a splendid fish was opened at dinner-time the ring was discovered. Amasis took this as a sign that something dreadful was going to happen to Polycrates, and fearing that his own feelings might be grieved by something awful happening to Polycrates (he must have had a queer idea of friendship) he solemnly renounced his acquaintance. In the event all sorts of horrid things happened to Polycrates. If you accept your punishment bravely, and set about mending your ways, the lucky slap has answered the main legitimate object of all punishment. Then, again, it may be recollected, both as compensation and consolation, that if you have received a slap in the face you have also administered a variety of slaps in your time. I once declined to have anything to do with Podgers's manuscripts when he wished for their publication. Naturally enough, when I wrote something of my own, Podgers contrived to write a review of it, and spite furnished him with a certain amount of literary vigour. Why, Macaulay was always slapping Croker's face, and Croker was always slapping, or trying to slap, Macaulay's face. Not that he minded. It amused Croker, and did not hurt

Macaulay. We see, in the recent correspondence of Macvey Napier, how Lord Brougham was constantly slapping people in the face, and how everybody was slapping Brougham in the face. 'We all go slapping—slapping, slapping, slapping,' might be a chorus for 'indolent irresponsible reviewers'—at least as far as the bygone days of the old *Edinburgh Review* are concerned. Now, we find in the Macvey correspondence that the great Macaulay himself once seriously contemplated the possibility of having to go out to fight a duel. What would his father and mother have thought of it, not to mention good Hannah More, who brought him up in such an eminently judicious manner, although the old lady, before she died, got very much out of humour with 'Tom,' and spoke with much sharpness to him, which he took very quietly, like the gentleman he was. A duel, owing to a literary quarrel between Macaulay and another man, would have been a greater scandal than the duel between Lord Winchelsea and the Duke of Wellington.

Time was when it was thought that a slap in the face could only be artistically treated on the plan of the duello. Such an insult, it was supposed, could only be washed out by blood. It is, I am greatly afraid, a mistake to suppose that duelling is the dead-and-gone custom which it is generally assumed to be. Mr. Trollope, in one of his novels, makes use of the incident as not an unlikely one to occur in modern life. I remember one day dining at an hotel *table-d'hôte* amid the sweet scenery of North Wales, and becoming rather intimate with a gentleman who sat by me. In the course of the evening he told me that, some time before, a man had

behaved villanously ; that he had challenged him ; that they had gone over to Belgium, and that he had shot him dead. It was a hideous story, and I tried hard to believe that the man was trying—but for what reason?—to impose upon my credulity. The narrative seemed real enough, and, indeed, there were several circumstances that seemed to confirm it. It is not necessary to go into any argument on the subject, but at the same time the total irrationality of the duel entirely deprives it of being an artistic mode of receiving a slap in the face. It is quite possible that the injured person may be winged or killed. Indeed, I have a theory that the history of duelling would show that the injured person is oftener winged or killed than not. I cannot admit that the sword or pistol would furnish artistic treatment for a slap in the face.

That slightly comic idea of Poly-crates, that since nobody else would slap his face he would slap his own face, is one hardly likely to take hold of the British mind. In the fourteenth century there was an Order of Flagellants, who used to slap their own faces and one another's faces with great vigour, and adopted every variety of the use of the lash. There were long processions of penitents, who would sometimes march through the streets of towns, and sometimes with torches and banners would penetrate into midnight solitudes of mountain and forest, scourging all round unmercifully. A great enthusiasm was created in their behalf on the Continent, and a band of Flagellants came over to England to find disciples. The good folk of London, however, did not 'seem to see it.' It is said that they did not make a single convert in the whole of England. We have a prejudice,

both nationally and individually, to a slap in the face. A friend of mine having become very Romish, I asked him why he did not carry out the entire idea, and macerate and mortify himself. 'No,' he replied ; 'St. Paul was a very sensible man, and he spoke of cherishing the body and nourishing it, which is my idea.' Had my friend, however, studied the Pauline letters he would have seen that St. Paul makes use of a very curious word, which signifies bruising oneself under the eye, and so lays down the rule that a man may be so justly angry with himself that he may slap his own face.

I remember one day having a discussion with a friend on the artistic way of treating a slap in the face which is recommended in the Good Book. Our Quaker brethren take these things very literally. Of course they are human, after all. 'Friend, my religion forbids me to go to law with thee ; but if thou dost not pay what thou owest, one of the ungodly, whom they call my solicitor, will assuredly put thee in prison.' The text-book of this worthy sect, Barclay's *Apology for the Quakers*, which at the present day would be called decidedly Broad Church, is a very noble work. If King Charles II. ever read Barclay's dedication of the book to him, his ears must have tingled as with very decided slaps : 'He hath often faithfully warned thee by His servants, since He restored thee to thy royal dignity, that thy heart might not wax wanton against Him, to forget His mercies and providences towards thee ; whereby He might permit thee to be soothed up and lulled asleep in thy sins by the flattering of court parasites, who by their fawning are the ruin of many princes. . .

Thou hast tasted of prosperity and adversity; thou knowest what it is to be banished thy native country, to be overruled as well as to rule and sit upon the throne; and being oppressed, thou hast reason to know how hateful the oppressor is both to God and man. If after all these warnings and advertisements thou dost not turn unto the Lord with all thy heart, but forget Him who remembered thee in thy distress, and give up thyself to follow lust and vanity, surely great will be thy condemnation.' Begging pardon for this digression—if, indeed, such an interesting quotation needs apology—let us go back to the Quaker method of treating a slap on the cheek, namely, to render the other cheek also. My friend, a grave substantial justice of the peace, was dilating on the utter impossibility of taking such words literally. 'Well, I don't know, after all,' I ventured to say, 'whether the precept might not practically work more easily than you suppose. If I so far forget myself and you, or if you so far forget me and yourself—either supposition being equally impossible—and if one of us was simply to look at his old friend and turn the other cheek, don't you think this simple act of rebuke, at least in the case of men of our standing, would really be the best way of retaliation?' I really think that it would be a very effective plan; and my friend, after a little consideration, also thought that it might possibly be a very effective way with himself. I feel sure that it would.

I cannot help thinking what a glorious opportunity was lost by Germany in not treating generously, and, because generously, therefore artistically, that huge slap in the face that France had given her. According to the rights of conquest, Germany rightly ex-

acted Alsace and Lorraine. But if she had only renounced that claim—if she had only forgiven France, had only shown how firm was her grasp upon those provinces, and then released them! My own impression, when I was lately abroad, was, that of the two countries, France and Germany, France was most likely the happier and the better off. How much of that immense indemnity has gone to the levying of armies and the strengthening of fortresses! The burden of the taxation becomes most oppressive. In some parts of the country there are the deepest murmurs of indignation. Bismarck has to coquette with the Ultramontanes respecting the relaxation of the Falk Laws, that he may obtain support for his fiscal schemes. If Germany had restored those provinces, there would have been an end of any fear of future aggression on the side of France. Europe would not then be the vast armed camp which it is this day. The permutations and combinations of policy among the great powers would not then be regarded with watchful jealousy, lest Germany should lay herself open for the retaliatory slap which France is burning to render. If Germany had only acted artistically, she would have been as safe from France as the public law of Europe has made Belgium safe. Europe would have regarded her soil as sacred; the world would have looked in admiration upon her. But such Utopian conduct was hardly to be expected. It would be too much for Teutonic nature, too much for human nature.

'Ah, when shall all men's good
Be each man's aim, and universal peace
Lie like a line of light across the sea,
And like a lane of beams athwart the
lands
Through all the compass of the golden
year?'

It will be found by sad experience that a part of every life is spent litigiously. Just as in a state, so in man, the epitome of a state, there is always a war department. Let us try and reduce its dimensions to as narrow limits as we can. When we receive that inevitable slap in the face, which is sure to come suddenly round some corner, let us take it artistically. Like Cæsar, let us fold our toga gracefully around us. I do not say that we should not feel resentment. We need not be like the patient donkey, whose meek eye seems to say: 'Do not kick me; but if you like to kick me, do not kick me so very hard.' I should like my Quaker friends to study Bishop Butler's famous sermon on resentment, in that noble series which he preached in the Rolls Chapel on human nature. How the people in the Rolls Chapel must have stared, at least if they were not too sleepy, when Butler preached those immortal sermons! He might as well have read the eleventh book of Euclid to them. Anger is a divinely planted impulse, and we often do well to be angry; only 'let not the sun go down upon your wrath.' If you have contrived to hammer your moral nature into anything like proper shape, the instinct of the moment will teach you how to receive it artistically; whether it is your melancholy duty to punish it—not, mind you, in a personal, but in a judicial, spirit—or whether you own that you deserve it, and resolve to extract some safety from that nettle. I know that the Athenian orator advised the fickle Demos to punish their revolted colony according to the flush of keen resentment which they felt at the first moment of

the offence, and not according to any after-thoughts. But, nevertheless, I would advise my friends not to be in too great a hurry to return a Roland for an Oliver. Above all, never harbour continuous resentment in your breast. It will lie there as a serpent that will poison and bite you much more than it will poison and bite the offender.

'Some write their wrongs in marble; he,
more just,
Stooped down serene and wrote them in
the dust.'

Sir James Graham once said in the House of Commons that he had made so many mistakes in his life, that he could not be hard upon the mistakes of other people. Knowing our constant liability to error, we should live in an atmosphere of forgiveness. Let us grasp the hand which was once raised to slap, but is now offered to us in repentant amity. If we want to heap coals of fire on our enemy's head, let us do all we can for him. That friendly flame will at least warm our own breasts, and perchance thaw his unnatural coldness into genial heat.

Now I am conscious that I have rather played round the subject, than have given my own prescription respecting the artistic treatment of the slap. But it is really the best way of dealing with some kinds of subjects. It is the Socratic treatment in the Platonic Dialogues of Search. You cannot lay down a rule in all cases, but you can lay down the principles which may apply more or less to all incidents. As Jack Bunsby sagely observed, 'The bearings of this observation lays in the application of it.'

F. A.

RABELAIS AND THE INNKEEPER.

THAT witty French plague of the priests, Rabelais,
At Lyons arrived on a fine summer's day,
With no means, save his wits, left for paying his way.
Three weeks and a day he'd been journeying homeward,
Rather under a cloud ; and his back was turned Rome-ward ;
For he'd found that Rome wasn't exactly the spot for him :
His tongue running loose there, the place grew too hot for him.
So, coming to Lyons by devious routes,
Somewhat wayworn and thin, like the soles of his boots,
He went into an inn, with a confident air,
And gave orders meat, drink, and a bed to prepare.
Some soup he had first (that he didn't much care about),
Then fillet of cod, from the middle or thereabout,
With sauce *apropos* ; and (still more to his taste) he,
For *pièce de résistance*, had veal and ham pasty.
These formed his repast, with some wine of the best,
That sent him in extra good-humour to rest.
And he slept till the dawn, nor of 'ways and means' dreamt he,
Though his garments were old and his pockets were empty.
For the fact is, before he lay down in his bed,
An idea had been shaping itself in his head ;
And its fruits in the morning were found in his hat !
For, rising while all were asleep but the cat,
He busied himself putting ashes and mould in
Two small canvas bags, such as bankers put gold in ;
Then, closing their mouths, he with double knots tied them,
And sealed with black wax, and wrote 'POISON' outside them !
And, tossing them gaily, they put him in mind
Of that oft-quoted fruit of the Dead Sea, whose rind,
Though fair to the sight, when your knife you insert in,
You find has got nothing but ashes and dirt in.
But it wasn't his purpose to sit there and moralise :
Mere fancies, when you're in a scrape, are but poor allies.
So at leisure he brushed himself up (for a rule he
In all things observed was to take matters coolly),
And, putting the bags (as I've already said)
In his hat on a chair by the side of the bed,
He to breakfast went down as the clock went 8.30 ;
And was passed on the stairs by a chambermaid flirty,
Who, entering his bedroom (third floor, number two),
Began prying about—as some chambermaids do—
Irresistibly moved by inquisitive longings
To turn topsy-turvy a stranger's belongings ;
And at sight of the bags (like two eggs in a nest,
As they lay in the hat), she exclaimed, 'O, I'm blest !'
(An unpolished expression, it must be confessed ;)

For she knew, though with schooling she'd not been much worried,
That P-O-I-S-O-N spelt something horrid ;
And on telling her fears to her mistress and master,
They, with faces so pale they looked like alabaster,
Sent and begged that the mayor would send somebody there,
To investigate what they thought wasn't quite 'square.'
So he wrote a search-warrant, and signed his name large on't,
And his clerk, with six tall men-at-arms and a sergeant,
Despatched to the spot, just to see 'what was what ;'
For who knew but it might be some murderous plot ?
The object, meanwhile, of this wonder and dread
So complacently sat at his food, you'd have said
That there wasn't a happier man in all France ;
And he smiled as he felt he was looked at askance,
And whispered about, as a boy in disgrace is ;
Then the ostler peeped in at the door, making faces,
And Rabelais, up-starting to ask what the knave meant,
Heard the jingle and tramp of armed men on the pavement.
But they neither surprised nor the least bit confounded him,
When straight, at a sign from the host, they surrounded him,
And marched him up-stairs to his room in the space
Of time that it takes to say, 'Right about face !'
Then he forestalled their questions by grimly observing
(With a dangerous look, like Macbeth, played by Irving),
'I know all about the two little bags there,
They are meant *for the king and the queen* ; so beware !
And *take me to Court*, that his majesty's ear
May learn from my lips what will make him look queer !
Then shall all be made clear, though I'm known to none here.'
Now at Court there were people whom Rabelais knew well :
The *priests* knew the sting of his pen only too well,
In the book *Pantagruel*, so witty and cruel,
And, in clerical eyes, fit for nothing but fuel.
It's a book that's too rude to do more than allude to,
And the Pope (who was gouty, and just in the mood to)
Anathematised it ; and all who should read it
Were to come to no good—at least, so he decreed it.
But the King, when entreated to mark his displeasure
Of an author whose writings had shocked beyond measure
All people who orthodox were and respectable,
Read the book to the end, and pronounced it 'delectable.'
And thenceforward, in all escapades and mischances,
He was sure of a friend in the merry King Francis
(Who, with Harry the Eighth and the 'cream' of two nations,
At the 'Field of Gold Cloth' had such jollifications).
So our hero was put on the steadiest of nags,
And a man at his side bore the two little bags
(Little dreaming that they were as guiltless of poison
As the thick bread-and-butter you feed little boys on) ;
And no guard watched more closely, with firearms all loaded,
Than the soldiers who took him to royal Fontainebleau did.
The rest is soon told, for you've probably guessed
The intent of this somewhat elaborate jest.

King Francis was charmed, when, from Rabelais himself,
Whom he knew for a clever and mischievous elf,
He heard how this comedy, feigning the tragic,
And acted with impudence potent as magic,
So scared the good host (like the tale of a ghost),
That the penniless guest had his boiled and his roast,
And his wine and night's lodging as snug as could be;
And got off, without paying a farthing, scot-free !
But, alas, that a king's sense of what's right and honest,
When the *wrong* affords plenty of fun, should be *non est*.
For, as for King Francis, 'twas nothing but fun to him ;
And the whimsical culprit had nothing more done to him
Than the modern fox-hunter who gallops across hedges,
Or the pantomime clown who steals pantaloons' sausages.

C. C.

THE ORDEAL BY PAINT;

Or my first Day in the Regiment.

By THE AUTHOR OF 'A REGIMENTAL MARTYR,' 'A REGIMENTAL VALENTINE,'
'REGIMENTAL LIFE,' &c.

'HERE he comes!'

'By gad, so he does! Hurrah! Some sport to-night.'

'Looks rather pale, doesn't he?'

'Yes, and will want a good deal of setting up too.'

'Poor devil! I pity him.'

As I was not at all afflicted—in that instance I might have said blessed—with deafness, these were a few of the remarks I could not help hearing as I drove up to the officers' mess of the cavalry barracks at Colchester, where I had come to join the regiment, to which I had been gazetted a couple of months before.

Quite unwittingly, I had chosen a very poor time for presenting myself. 'Mid-day stables' were just over, and almost all the officers of the regiment were waiting about the verandah till luncheon should be ready. They were none of them in very amiable tempers; for they had just heard in the office that a letter had come down for them to hold themselves in readiness to march to the autumn manoeuvres at Aldershot, and Aldershot is, as most people know, a spot no cavalry officer at all rejoices to find himself near, even when there are no manoeuvres going on.

Anything more uncomfortable than were my feelings that morning could not be easily imagined. I had never met my regiment before. I knew none of the men, and I was quite at a loss to know to whom I must address myself. However, I was compelled to act;

and stumbling out of the cab, with my heart in my throat and great beads of perspiration breaking out upon my forehead, I stood for a moment while my future comrades inspected me, as if I were a polo-pony for sale.

My hesitation lasted but an instant. I chose my man, an elderly rather good-looking officer, with a bald head and well-waxed moustache; so, with a ghastly grin, I blurted out,

'I've come to join.'

'O, have you?' said he carelessly, and with an expression of intense amusement on his face! 'Your name's Winter, I suppose? O, all right. Come along with me, and I'll introduce you to the colonel. I think you have not met him yet.'

'No,' I answered, beginning to feel a little more at my ease.

'Wait a moment; I'll just make you acquainted with these fellows first.'

This terrible ordeal over, I was hustled off by my elderly friend to be presented to the colonel, whom we found sitting in the office with his adjutant making arrangements for the coming manoeuvres.

'I've brought Mr. Winter to see you, sir. He's come to join,' said my guide.

'Ah, how are you?' said the colonel. 'I'm very glad to see you; for we're rather short of subalterns, and every addition is a great help. Have you got your

uniform and that sort of thing? I hope you'll like your work. Are you fond of riding?

I answered modestly that I was, but I was afraid my experience in that line was rather limited. As I spoke, a few riding-school anecdotes began to crop up in my mind; for, during the two last months, every man I had met seemed to consider it his duty to impress upon me the fact that a riding-school is neither more nor less than a second *Inferno*.

'Brought any hunters down with you?'

'No, sir.'

'Umph! A pity! This is a fair hunting-district. However, those are little additions easily made, and I've no doubt you'll soon fall into the ways of the regiment. You'll find your brother-officers quite ready to help you in anything so far as sport is concerned.'

Of a truth I did; for as soon as it became known that I was anxious to buy a hunter, there was scarcely an officer in the regiment who was not anxious to sell me one, 'perfectly sound, and quite good enough to win a steepchase.'

My interview with the colonel over, I was taken by my elderly friend to have lunch. On the way to the messroom we met an officer, who seemed to me very old to be still in the army.

'Here's old Muggins, the riding-master,' said my guide, whom I afterwards found was called 'the Fossil,' on account of his antique appearance. 'Well, Muggins, this is Mr. Winter, just joined.'

'Ho!' said Mr. Muggins. 'Glad to see you. Fond of riding? Hey?'

I returned the same answer that I had given to the colonel on that subject, and Mr. Muggins grinned—a grin which somehow

reminded me of a cat playing with a mouse.

'Ho, my boy,' said he; 'don't know much about it, don't you? Well, we'll soon tickle you hup a bit. Hey, Moore?'

'Yes, I daresay;' in rather a bored tone. 'Come along, Winter. Beastly old cad, Muggins!' he burst out, as soon as we were out of earshot. 'Always sneaking about and getting the young chaps into trouble, except they happen to be willing to bribe him.'

At lunch I was posted next to a young subaltern of about six months' service, who, having himself just got over the rough part of joining, thought it his bounden duty to 'swagger' over me. He was a babyish-looking flaxen-haired cornet, with about as much hair on his upper lip as you might find upon that of a boy of twelve. He went—as I very soon heard, in spite of my fright—by the name of 'the Boy,' occasionally varied by that of 'the Brat.'

'Ah, which is your county?' drawled this youngster, quite affecting the old soldier.

'Devon,' said I, trying in vain to swallow a lump of cutlet which had found its way into my mouth; how, I was really too much excited to know, for I was painfully aware that every eye in the room was upon me.

'Ah, any hounds down there?'

'O yes. I think so,' I stammered, being in too much of a 'funk' to know, or rather remember, whether there were or not.

'Ah,' said my young cornet; and there our conversation ended, and I was thus enabled to hear a little of what was going on at the other end of the room; for two or three fellows, who had finished their lunch, had left the table and were standing in a group on the hearthrug.

'I should like to buy that chap at my valuation, and sell him at his own,' said one. 'I'm rather hard up, and the profit might help me a bit.'

'What a rum way the young beggar pronounces his *h*'s!' said a second, taking no notice whatever of the previous remark.

'Ah,' put in a third, 'yes, poor devil! Probably he's only just learned them.'

'Not much to look at, is he?' said the first one, following up his own train of thought.

It may easily be imagined that these remarks did not tend to cure my extreme nervousness, which was evidently taken for 'swagger.'

After I had finished, or pretended to finish, some lunch, during which I managed to capsize a tumbler of beer half into my plate and half over the table, I was shown my room by the boy of tender years, who, being junior, was told-off to look after me and set me straight a bit.

My room proved to be about thirteen feet square by eleven high, and there I found two men busily engaged in unpacking my furniture, which had been sent down from town the day before.

Amongst a great number of deficiencies I found I had forgotten to buy sheets for my bed; but, luckily, one of the men, who was servant to another officer, managed to borrow a pair for me until I could get some sent up from the town.

In the course of an hour or two my room was put into something like order; and just as the men were leaving, I asked how my luggage had got there, and who had paid for my cab. They told me that they had done so, having rescued my boxes from a lot of young officers, anxious, I daresay, to discover where I had bought

my uniform, belts, boots, and, indeed, everything I possessed.

In my gratitude for their thoughtfulness I inquired how much they had paid the cabman, magnanimously intending to double it when I repaid them. The price they named, however, entirely precluded the possibility of this; in fact, it was so large that it would, I thought, have been sufficient to buy the cab itself, horse, man and all, out and out. One of the men informed me that he had been ordered to look after me, until I had got a servant of my own, and that he would return at half-past seven to dress me for dinner. As there was only about an hour to spare, I got out some writing-materials and wrote a letter to my father. Then I lay down upon my new bed until half-past seven should arrive.

I think I must have fallen asleep, for I remember nothing until I heard a loud 'jar-r-r-rat' at my door.

'Come in!' I cried.

'It's half-past seven, sir, and I've brought you some hot water and your uniform; but I can't find no mess-waistcoat, sir.'

'The devil!' I ejaculated, remembering suddenly that my tailor had told me the day before that it still required a little pressing, but should be sent down that night without fail; a promise he had, of course, taken infinite pains not to keep.

'Perhaps I can borrow one for you, sir,' suggested Robinson.

'For goodness' sake, go and try,' I said eagerly.

He left on the table a letter, which I immediately opened and found was an invitation from the colonel and officers of the regiment to dine. Not knowing the custom of the service, I at once set that down as 'chaff,' and the idea of

answering it never once entered my head.

In about five minutes Robinson returned, with a dilapidated article, which I almost failed to recognise as a cavalry mess-waistcoat.

'I am not going to put that thing on!' I said, with much indignation.

Robinson, however, assured me that, even if I had it, it would be useless to wear anything better; for the 400th Foot, who were quartered on the opposite side of the town, were to dine with the 52d Dragoons that night, and there was sure to be some extra rough work going on.

When my dressing was complete, I found, as every one does on joining, that my uniform did not fit as it seemed to do in the tailor's shop. My overalls were too loose and baggy, and not high enough in the waist. Indeed, it was only by strapping them up till I thought they would crack that I managed to make the top of the overalls and the bottom of the waistcoat meet at all. The borrowed waistcoat, too, was so tight and uncomfortable about the neck that I thought if I could persuade anything more solid than soup and champagne to pass down my throat that night, I should be extremely lucky.

At last I was ready, and compelled to betake myself off in spite of the utter discomfort I was in. It was wonderful how I missed the tails of my ordinary evening coat; and I went down the steps—one could hardly call them stairs—and along the verandah into the anteroom, feeling as if I had suddenly been transformed into an exceedingly long-legged Manx cat.

Here I found a couple of waiters busily handing sherry-and-bitters to a room full of officers, some of whom, from the difference in their

uniform must, I knew, belong to the 400th. I approached one of the latter, in a very deferential spirit, and had certainly not said a dozen words before he remarked, 'Ah, I suppose you've just joined!'

This was a fact which I was most anxious to conceal, and the same sort of feeling crept over me which I should fancy comes over a man suddenly convicted of theft. I thought further parley with him would be useless, as he would be sure to laugh at everything I said, so I left him and sat down in a corner by myself until dinner was announced.

Being a guest, I was allowed to pass in amongst the first few, and had the pleasure of sitting next Major Silver, a man devoted to hunting, and never happy except in the pursuit of that sport or when talking of long-runs, hunters, and hounds. Now, as I wasn't very well versed in that line, we bored each other terribly, and I was glad when he transferred his conversation from me to his right-hand neighbour, and I was left alone. I was very tired with unpacking; the dinner was so long, and the ready banter and chaff so bewildering that once or twice it was as much as I could do to keep myself from falling asleep—an achievement which, if I had indulged in it, would have probably been attended by very serious consequences, and of which, so long as I remained in the army, I should never have heard the end.

Happily, however, dinner could not last all night, and at eleven o'clock the colonel and major, with some of the senior 400th guests, rose and went into the anteroom. I was following them, at a very respectful distance, when—whirr, squash!—against the back of my head came an over-ripe

orange, which sent me flying, as I thought for a moment, into another world. I turned as quickly as I could to see who had thrown it, but not a man was out of his place, there was not a smile upon a single lip. One of them, however, asked me to come back and have another glass of champagne before I went to bed. So I returned, and had the pleasure of a glass of wine with a man called Burroughes, the senior subaltern, and a wild harum-scarum sort of fellow, as I afterwards found to my cost.

This glass was followed by another and another and another, with first one and then another member of the mess, and, as the order of the night was no 'heel-taps,' I began to think that the best thing I could do would be to slip away and be off to bed. So, five minutes afterwards, little thinking how eagerly my brother officers were awaiting this event, and fondly imagining they were all too much occupied to take any notice of me or my exit, I quietly went to bed. In ten minutes I was sound asleep; but how long that sleep lasted I cannot say. I only know that I had a terrible dream, for I thought I had fallen into the hyena's den at the Zoological Gardens, and then I awoke. There was such a yelling and shouting and holloaing at the foot of my stairs that at first I feared there must be a fire or something of that sort. I soon discovered that the sounds were approaching my door with startling rapidity; and then, catching the sound of my own name, I knew instinctively that they were seeking me and meant me no good.

My first idea was that the best thing I could do would be to jump out of bed and slip on a smoking-suit or dressing-gown, and pretend I hadn't been to bed at

all; but on consideration I thought I would stick to my bed and feign sound sleep. I was fool enough to imagine that perhaps, if they found me asleep, they might go away. Poor deluded Cornet Winter!

My heart had given a tremendous jump when I first heard them; and as they came nearer and nearer, so it got higher and higher, until by the time they reached my door it was fairly in my mouth.

'Has he locked the door?' I heard a voice say.

'Yes, rather.'

'O, capital!'

What could that mean?

'Go on, somebody.'

In two minutes my door gave way, and about a dozen officers came rolling and tumbling over each other into the room. Then a voice, which I recognised as Burroughes's, called out,

'Winter!'

No reply.

'Win-ter!'

This time a little louder.

Still no answer.

'Young devil's shamming; pull him out!'

Thereupon one or two seized the bar at the head of my bed, while as many others took hold of that at the foot, and they completely overturned me on to the floor, where I lay quite helpless with fright. Two young fellows immediately lifted me up, and, in spite of my urgent protests, conducted me down-stairs to the anteroom, a prisoner of war, and dressed exactly as I had tumbled out of bed, with the addition of a pouch-belt and girdle, which they put on over my night-shirt to give me a martial bearing, as they termed it. I found that the anteroom table had been completely cleared of the newspapers, which were usually scattered upon it,

and five chairs had been placed round it. In front of each were put blue paper, pens, and ink. I grew more and more frightened when I found I was to be tried by court-martial for a great and heinous offence committed against her Majesty.

Burroughes did not waste a moment in taking his seat at the table as president of the court-martial, and the other four were quickly filled in by junior officers. A sixth was appointed prosecutor; two were announced as witnesses, and three were told-off as a guard, one of them being promoted to the rank of corporal of the guard in charge of the prisoner.

The charges were then read as follows: 1. Conduct prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline on the part of John Strange Winter, cornet of the 52d Dragoons, in having at Colchester, on the night of the 10th of July 18—, gone to bed, whilst several guests, officers of another regiment, remained in the anteroom—it being the duty of John Strange Winter, cornet, to entertain them. 2. Conduct unbecoming a subaltern in going to bed whilst senior officers remained in the anteroom.

I was then placed at the foot of the table between my escort, one of whom shouldered a pair of tongs, and the other a shovel, while the corporal of the guard was armed with a poker, where-with he every now and again gave me a dig behind, if I did not stand bolt upright at 'attention.'

I was asked if I objected to be tried by any of the officers whom I saw at the table, and on receiving my answer in the negative, the oath was read.

'You shall well and truly try and determine the case according to the evidence in the matter now

before you, so help you, Jorrockes, &c.

This was taken in due form, and with the utmost gravity. *Handley Cross* being, I believe, the book used; and the trial proceeded.

Lieutenant Bates, on being duly sworn, stated:

'Sir, at Colchester Barracks, on the night of the 10th of July 18—, I saw the prisoner now before the court-martial sneak off to bed about half-past eleven. There were several guests, officers of another regiment, still remaining in the anteroom. I was also present when the prisoner was arrested in his own room.'

Lieutenant Cavasson being duly sworn, stated:

'Sir, I was in the mess-room when the prisoner went to bed. There were several captains and other senior officers still in the room.'

This closed the evidence for the prosecution and the question was put to me,

'Have you anything to urge in your defence?'

I told them in a tremulous voice that I really was very tired, that I did not dream I was committing an outrageous offence, and that I wouldn't do it again.

Then I was conducted out of the room whilst the court considered its sentence.

Whilst we were waiting outside my guards with the witnesses and junior officers amused themselves and terrified me by relating previous sentences, and wondering what I should get. It was awfully cold waiting about, for, although it was midsummer and very hot in the day, yet, in the small hours of the night, to wait ten minutes in a draughty hall with no more clothing than a night-shirt and a pouch-belt is a very different matter. At last we were sum-

moned within, and I was led to my place at the foot of the table. Lieutenant Burroughes broke the silence.

'John Strange Winter, you have been found guilty of two very glaring and heinous offences, and this court has adjudged that you receive two strokes from a birch-rod from every member of the mess now present. I hope it may be a warning to you for the future.'

This announcement was received by my tormentors with a ringing cheer. I was ready to sink with fright when I saw the birch produced, and rough hands were laid upon me. My guard with the tongs, although apparently the roughest of the lot, whispered to me to 'hold my jaw and neither struggle nor cry out,' and something in the kindly voice told me his advice was good, so I took it.

The castigation was mere child's play, except when it came to Burroughes's turn.

'Ah, this won't do,' I heard him say; 'we shall have the young beggar laughing in his sleeve at us. We really must show him that there is something like discipline in the regiment.'

And he certainly did.

'Well, come now,' said that stern gentleman, when my punishment was over, 'the young one's plucky, at all events.'

If my brother officers had administered necessary strictness, I certainly could not complain of the way in which I was treated afterward; for they carried me off into the mess-room, where we found a supper of grilled bones, devilled kidneys, and so forth, spread upon the table.

When we had eaten and drunken I was ordered to mount the brass and sing a song. The 'brass' was a square piece of that metal form-

ed by the meeting of the leaves of the table; and a queer figure I must have cut in my scanty attire. They seemed to think so, for they all laughed and cheered heartily.

I had the sense to know that a moment's hesitation would be fatal to my popularity, and I dashed at once into the first comic song that came into my head. It was the story of a sailor who got cast away upon an island, taken prisoner by savages, who appropriated his clothes to themselves, finally marrying him to a princess of the royal blood. It was received with uproarious applause; but, unfortunately for me, I did not get to the end without an interruption. I only sang as far as,

'And there behold me standing,
A waistcoat for my clothes,
A hat and boots, striped red and blue,
And a ring stuck through my nose,'

when, to my dismay, I heard a voice suggesting that it would be all the better if I were dressed in character. The idea caught like wildfire—two pots of paint were produced, whence I know not, and in an incredibly short time I was daubed from head to foot with rings of red and blue paint, and again mounted on the brass to finish my song.

At last the revelries were ended, and I was permitted to go to my room, thoroughly worn out, and half stifled by the disgusting smell and feeling of the paint. Luckily I knew something of art, and had a big bottle of turpentine with me, which, with the help of a palette-knife, brought most of the stuff off.

It was broad daylight ere I sought my couch; and when at length I fell asleep, it was only to dream it all over again, and to sing in fancy the chorus of my song,

'Jam-see, jee-mee, jabber jee hoy!
Jabberee, doree, poree,
Hikey, pikey, sikey, orikey,
Chilingowoolab adoree!'

ON WHIST AS A BUSINESS.

IN a proverb, which is one of the household words of the English people, we are told that all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. In these days of cram and competition we all of us may do well to bear in mind the truths contained in this saying. To rise in our profession, to keep ourselves before the public, to obtain the ordinary means of sustenance, all make us so incessant in our efforts and so dangerously industrious that often, even if we are fortunate enough to grasp the laurel-wreath of victory, we have to exchange it for the cypress of the funereal garland. We are so eager, so anxious, so terribly in earnest, in our struggles for self-advancement, that we allow ourselves no time for relaxation and repose. We are in business; we know the competitors who are pitted against us, and who are ever ready to profit by our negligence and over-caution, consequently we worry our nervous system to give competition no chance; we begin our labours early and end them late; we essay to checkmate our rivals at every turn; we plot our commercial combinations with the most consummate skill, so as not to leave a single point in our operations for the enemy to obtain an advantage; and then jubilant and triumphant, we lay our heads upon our bursting money-bags, only for a shattered constitution, that has for years been kept at high pressure, and has been sternly denied its necessary rest and pleasures, to own itself vanquished, and to force us sud-

denly to quit the scenes of our struggles. We are at the Bar; we have had to wait years for our practice, and have no intention, now that the tide has turned, of not being borne upon its waters to fortune; we work as a slave at the galleys—in court all day, in the House of Commons all night, and in the gray of the early morning we are seen studying our briefs; then, when dyspepsia has claimed us for its own, and our liver is as swollen as our brief-bag, we stretch forth our hand and take hold of the prizes that are set before us—how long to enjoy them? how soon to relinquish them? We live in the days when the survival of the fittest is our creed, when success or extinction is our motto, and how often have we to fall martyrs to our faith! Human nature, like the seashore, or even the appetite of an alderman, has its limits, and in endeavouring to go beyond we are bound to be made suffer for our short-sighted temerity. If we work we must have recreation; if we waste our tissues by intellectual or physical labour we must restore the deficiency by pleasure or repose, for all work and no play, not only makes the typical Jack a dull, but soon a defunct, boy. Labour and leisure are the laws of our moral being, and they are not to be infringed with impunity.

But how are we to obtain repose or relaxation? Repose is not rest when it degenerates into *ennui*; and relaxation, which is obtained by disagreeable efforts,

is not pleasure. We may not have the requisite means to provide the most exhilarating of all pleasures: the cheerful canter, the brisk bracing trot, the excitement of a day with the hounds, may be to us unknown joys, and as much beyond our reach as dry sherry and a winter at Mentone are to the parish pauper. Gout, rheumatism, and confounded old age may compel us to eschew cricket and lawn-tennis, archery and rinking. What are we to do? Even if authors were always amusing or instructive, we cannot ever be trying our eyes with reading. Music, we know, has charms to soothe the savage breast; but good music is not always to be had, and even when we are fortunate enough to be able to listen to it, how often, after a hard day's work, does it result in wrapping its tired audience in irreverent slumber? We want relaxation without the severity of fatigue, interest without a baneful excitement, and amusement without depression. Where can you get it? I answer, At the whist-table.

Is there a happier period in the whole day than when, after a comfortable dinner with digestion agreeably waiting upon appetite, cigar in mouth, we betake ourselves to the fascinating board of green cloth; the well-shaded candles shedding a soft subdued light upon the table; the clean cards longing to be set free from their virgin cases; the red and white counters standing apart in separate groups, like the armies in the Wars of the Roses awaiting the conflict; the hush of the room, the imagination busy with the anticipated victories of science over luck? There are many excellent people who, because gambling is associated with cards, strictly taboo 'the devil's picture-books,'

and will not permit them to take any part in the pleasures of their households. No one who has seen the terrible miseries that follow in the wake of the gambler's career can say that this objection is wholly undeserved. It is not for me to preach. Like most men I have known what it is to watch with eager eyes the fall of the cards at *trente et quarante*, to hope for the lucky eight or nine at baccarat, and to put in an appearance at the fascinating round games of loo, Napoleon, brag, poker, and Newmarket. But with age comes experience; and when invited by the voice of the charmer to depart from the legitimate paths of card-playing, a stern and Spartan-like negative is my only answer. What! never? Well, hardly ever!

But whist is not gambling; it is a game which calls forth some of the best faculties of the brain, and causes chance to succumb before science. A whist-player of the first class requires to possess keen powers of observation, a clear and tenacious memory, the gift of quickly drawing inferences, a knowledge of varied combinations, and a shrewdness always on the watch for opportunity. It is much to be regretted that at most of the clubs so fine a game should be placed out of the reach of many men on account of the high points that are played. Whist as a study so pleasurable in itself that it can entirely dispense with the pernicious excitement of the gambler; to play for points which may involve a heavy pecuniary loss is utterly destructive of the beauty of the game; instead of a pleasant intellectual excitement, it then degenerates into anxiety, and is the fruitful parent of ill-temper, worry, and a feverish state of things utterly at variance with the spirit of the

game. Men of fortune will always be prone to gamble; yet there is nothing to prevent them from playing moderately low points, and betting amongst each other as high as they please. Were they to adopt this plan many a man, who keenly loves the noble game, but who is deterred from cutting in from the heavy losses he may be led to sustain, would often find his way into the card-room, to the enjoyment of himself and to the detriment of nobody. Half-crown points are quite sufficient to create excitement, and would not require on the part of the social Lazarus a large balance to lie idle at his banker's to meet a run of bad luck. But when it comes to crowns and pounds or ten-shilling points, and a fiver on the rub, or pounds and fives, a few nights of misfortune signify the loss of a small income. Whist should be played for the love of the game, and not for the money it may be the means of obtaining.

It has been said that every one thinks he can drive, and most persons think they can play whist. It seems to the uninitiated so simple for four people to sit down at a table and each to play thirteen cards. These guileless folk may be ignorant of the leads, they may have never studied the pages of Cavendish, they afford no information to their partner; yet they seldom, in private life, scruple to cut in and spoil a table. They look upon whist as they look upon a round game—not a thing to be studied seriously, because with good cards one wins, and with bad cards one loses. To read up the subject attentively seems beneath them; whist with them is a game, not a science. How often do we hear men saying, 'I am very fond of taking a hand at whist, but I can't be bothered about the rules, and all that!'

Why cannot they be bothered? What would they think of a man who said he was very fond of hunting, but who couldn't be bothered about learning to ride; or of a man who boated, but couldn't be bothered about learning to row; or who played cricket, racquets, lawn-tennis, but couldn't be bothered to learn the game? Why do they play whist week after week, yet systematically refuse to study the subject? To be a first-class whist-player is a gift, and few there be who possess it; but any one not a born fool can by a few weeks' study so far instruct himself in the game as to acquire the recognised rules—to know what cards to lead, what to play second hand, what to return to his partner, and how to deal with trumps. Whist has its laws like mathematics or political economy, and a man has no more chance of playing a rubber correctly without reading them up than he has of writing an article on the currency without knowing something of political economy, or of working out a problem without being acquainted with geometry. To put these laws into a simple and readable shape is the object of every writer upon whist, but nowhere have I come across instructions more lucid and more easy to be remembered than in the following verses, which were copied by me as they hung over the mantel-piece of a provincial club. Who is the author of this clever production I know not, but let me render him immortal in the pages of *London Society*:

'THE GAME OF WHIST.

If you the modern game of whist would know,
From this great principle its precepts flow:
Treat your own hand as to your partner's
joined,
And play, not one alone, but *both combined*.

Your first lead makes your partner understand
What is the chief component of your hand;
And hence there is necessity the strongest
That your *first lead be from your suit that's lowest*.

In this with ace and king, lead king, then ace;
With king and queen, king also has first place;
With ace, queen, knave, lead ace, and then the queen;
With ace, four small ones, ace should first be seen;
With queen, knave, ten, you let the queen precede;
In other cases you the *lowest* lead.

Ere you return your friend's, your *own* suit play;
But trumps you must return without delay.

When you return your partner's lead, take pains
To lead him back the *best* your hand contains,
If you receive not *more than three* at first;
If you had more, you may return the worst.

But if you hold the *master card*, you're bound
In most cases to play it *second round*.

Whene'er you want a lead, 'tis seldom wrong
To lead *up to the weak*, or *through the strong*.
If second hand, your *lowest* should be played,
Unless you mean "trump signal" to be made;
Or if you've king and queen, or ace and king,
Then one of these will be the proper thing.

Mind well the rules for trumps, you'll often need them:
When you hold five, 'tis always right to lead them;
Or if the lead won't come in time to you,
Then signal to your partner so to do.

Watch also for your partner's trump request,
To which, *with less than four*, play out your best.

To lead through honours turned up is bad play,
Unless you want the trump suit cleared away.

When, second hand, a doubtful risk you see,
Don't trump it, if you hold *more trumps than three*,
But having three or less, trump fearlessly

When weak in trumps yourself, don't force your friend,
But always force the *adverse* strong trump hand.

For sequences, stern custom has decreed
The *lowest* you must play, if you don't lead.

When you discard, weak suit you ought to choose,
For strong ones are too valuable to lose.'

From these rules it will be seen that whist is a game in which the players are always drawing inferences. If you lead the king, your partner knows that you have either ace or queen; if second hand you put on an unnecessarily high card, and afterwards, when the same suit is played, let fall a low card, your partner knows that you are calling for trumps; if you lead trumps early in the game, your partner knows that you have five, or that you wish trumps out in order to bring in certain strong suits in your hand; if you take the trick with the king, your partner knows that you have not the queen; if you trump a suit first round when second hand, your partner knows that you are weak in trumps; if you force your partner to ruff a suit, he concludes that you are strong in trumps. Thus the game calls forth all our powers of observation and calculation, and should be played in silence and without any interrupting agents around.

There is no game which reveals to us more the character of a man than whist. There is the man of cunning and deep design, who will always be in favour of over *finessing*, of tricky combinations which seldom come off, and whose play, if it misleads his opponents, is also successful in deceiving his partner. There is the timid fearful man, who plays an essentially nervous game; who never leads trumps unless he has amazing strength; who plays entirely for his own hand; who is given to

putting on his best cards second hand for fear he should lose the opportunity of ever making them; who, if he has a bad hand, is always ready to throw down his cards, and who never dreams of being of service to his partner. There is the superstitious man, who is a fervent believer in luck; who is always changing his chair and calling for new cards when fortune is adverse, who objects to being looked over, who has faith in playing on certain days or in certain coats, or in the efficacy of some fetish—a pocket-book, a pencil, an old coin—which he places upon the table to court the fickle goddess. There is the emotional man, the joy or gravity of whose face at once reveals that he holds good or bad cards; who is intoxicated with delight when he wins, and as gloomy as a mourner when he loses. There is the incessant grumbler, who before he even looks at his hand growls about 'his luck;' who wails like a Jeremiah about the rubbers he loses; who is always commenting upon the good fortune of others; who sighs and groans when his partner leads, as if a tooth were being drawn out of his head instead of a card out of his hand; who appeals to those around for sympathy when cruelly treated; and who, even when victorious, insults his luck by ironically remarking, 'Actually I have won a rubber!'

Indeed to comment upon the moral qualities of the individual as exemplified by whist would be endless. The game is a great test of breeding. Your true gentleman knows how to win without exultation, and to lose without temper. To take up bad hand after bad hand, never to find your partner with a suit, or to be the victim of a nasty run of ill-luck, is certainly not calculated to develop the amiable qualities of

our erring nature. Yet the well-bred player shows by no external signs the angry feelings within him: calm and quiet in all his *dealings*, he awaits the turn of the tide with the patience of the philosopher and the well-balanced temper of one who has learnt the value of self-control. With the vulgar it is very different: he is boisterous in his oburgations against fortune; he abuses his partner; he angrily bangs his card upon the table; he is hot, noisy, and restless, and pays his money ungraciously. It is the contrast between a silent majestic river and a shallow babbling brook.

I have said that whist is one of the most fascinating of amusements, but it is not given to every one to take it up. No man whose temper is ungovernable, who is unable to bear defeat, who hates losing his money, or who is intolerant of a partner's mistakes, should become a whist-player. Such a person not only renders himself ridiculous, but creates feuds at the table, and mars the pleasure and sociability of the game. No one should play unless he can afford to lose without causing himself anxiety. Nothing is more distressing than to win from one whom we know can ill spare what we deprive him of; both the victor and the vanquished are made uncomfortable. No one should sit down to play who is rendered heavy from the little side-dishes he loves, not wisely but too well, or whose brain is clouded by indulgence in the choicer vintages. Ah, but if whist were only to be played by those who are proficient in the game, whose tempers are never ruffled, whose memory is clear and limpid, whose balance permits them to stand a bad run of ill-luck, and who never complain of the tactics of their partner, how per-

fectly charming would every rubber become! In another and a better world we may perhaps play such whist; but not, I fear, so long as our imperfect human nature takes up its abode in this 'best of all possible' planets.

One word as to luck. Whether we believe in it or not, there is such a thing as luck. We see one man for a season persistently holding bad cards, losing rubber after rubber, and invariably being found by his partner with nothing in his hand. Nor is such misfortune due to bad play. As long as honours count for what they do in the rubber, a first-class player, it is calculated, has only the advantage of one point in the game over an indifferent player. Still, in spite of men grumbling about their luck, and assuring everybody that they invariably lose, take a cycle of three years and it will be found that luck is very even in its operations. I have seen men who have lost steadily throughout a whole year, yet in the next year

they have more than recovered their losses. I have seen a man lose thirteen rubbers running; yet shortly afterwards I saw him win every night during a whole week. No man who has made legitimate whist the occupation of his life has ever come to much grief. The men who have been 'broke' are those who play for points they cannot afford, and who have not the funds to stand a heavy run of bad luck; or those who, not content with the points, bet largely, backing their luck when they win, and plunging deeper and deeper to regain their losses when unfortunate. But legitimate whist—that is, whist at points that a man can afford to lose, and no bets—is the cheapest pleasure that can be indulged in. It offers one an agreeable rest after the day's labour, a healthy form of excitement, and intellectual exercise without fatigue. My advice to all is that of Talleyrand's, 'Play whist, and you will be spared a sorrowful old age.'

'A FACE IN THE SNOW!'

A SNOW-FLAKE fell like a single feather
Out of the heart of a soft gray cloud;
She and the snow-flake passed together
Into the midst of a passing crowd;
And I alone, in the winter weather,
Paused and faltered, and cried aloud:

'O sweet fair face, that will haunt me ever
Where have you gone that I may not go?
As a stream that flows to a far-off river,
So now my heart to your own will flow;
And a tender thought that is yours for ever
Follows your footsteps to and fro.

You know not—would you be glad for knowing?

You with the face of my lost dead love,
Sweet as a blossom in Eden growing,
Fit for the garden of God above;
And lit with a heavenly love-light, glowing
In eyes as tender as eyes of dove!

The cloud grows darker, the flakes are falling,
The gray dusk settles on street and lane;
And still I hear but a faint voice calling,
'Follow, O, follow me once again!
And my heart, its bitterest past recalling,
Faints and shudders with passionate pain.

The white world gleams, and the dead leaves quiver
On bare brown branches, on wintry trees;
The cold wind flutters with sigh and shiver—
Ah me! was it ever a summer breeze
That kissed the breast of a golden river,
And stole the scents of a hundred leas?

O face, sweet face, were you winged with sorrow,
To bring such memories back to me,
To make me long for a gladder morrow
Than ever my sad 'to-day' can be?
O face with the hue that the snow-flakes borrow,
As now they flutter o'er roof and tree!

Once more, once more, could *we* stand together
As stood we then in the gay bright spring,
With never a thought of winter weather
Whispered in touch of wind or wing,
While breezes flutter, and swallows hover,
And hearts hold music too sweet to sing!

I half forget that the snow is falling,
My own soul passes to where you are;
No hand of doom, with a touch appalling,
Can sever our love in a land afar.
I feel your heart to my own heart calling
Through silver spaces of moon and star!

* * * * *

O love, my words are but thoughts unspoken!
O, part the cloudrifts and look below;
And give me a word or sign in token
You love me still, who have loved *you* so,
As I stand alone with a heart half broken,
For sake of the face I saw in the snow!

RITA.



* FACE IN THE SNOW.



THE VIOLIN-PLAYER.

BY BERTHA THOMAS, AUTHOR OF 'PROUD MAISIE.'

CHAPTER I.

THE LITTLE REBEL.

It was a summer night at Stresa, on the Lago Maggiore. The sun had gone down behind the Monte Motterone, but the eastern hills across the lake still lay bathed in reflected tints of gold and purple and red. Slowly the opaline hues faded as the moon rose up over the Borromean islands, the white-walled palaces and tufted groves of oleander and magnolia glittering brightly beneath its rays. Especially the Isola Bella, her rock-cut terrace-gardens and turrets sharply defined against the violet sky, gleamed like a mirage, fair, but too fanciful, too delicate to be real.

A scene to set the stocks and the stones dreaming! Even the sober-minded Englishman, the wealthy owner of the villa Rondinelli, one of the numerous country-houses on the lake, who, with his son, a lad of eleven years old, was taking his regular evening walk along the shore, was so far beguiled by the spectacle before him as to lose himself for an instant in its contemplation.

He was a man over fifty,—an age when the living pleasures of hope have mostly been exchanged for the ghost-pleasures of memory; and as he stood watching the moonshine coquetting with the waves, the fish leaping in its flashes, the shimmering islets, and the darkly-shadowed purple hills, his dreams, if he had any, were of 'the days that are no more'—

reminiscences with a charm beyond that of his days present or days to come.

The attention of the boy was otherwise absorbed. A little crowd, thickening fast, had for some while been collecting on the shore, where a number of pollarded acacias stood in a square close to the landing-place of the lake steamers.

In the centre some half-dozen men were busy clearing a space, roping it round, setting up wooden barricades, and raising poles with cords and wires stretched across. A company of strolling acrobats adjusting their usual apparatus. Meantime, the whole native population of Stresa, pressing round, was watching the mysterious process with rapt interest.

Mr. Romer was abruptly awakened from his reverie by the sounds of music. But what music? An obstreperous cornet and shrill fiddle combining to execute a flashy, trashy air of Offenbach's, with liberal drum and trumpet accompaniments! Mr. Romer made a grimace, and was moving away, when his son twitched his sleeve, and called upon him to look.

Turning round, the father beheld a scene as fantastic as a picture of Callot's.

The enclosure, a little extemporised open-air circus, was lit up by rows of flaming torches set in long wooden stands, shedding a lurid glare over the foliage of the trees, the upturned faces of the crowd beneath, and the figure of a rope-dancer, suspended about ten

or twelve feet from the ground, upon whom all eyes were fixed; a stout lady in flimsy pink skirts, with paper flowers in her hair, who was going through all the accustomed feats and gyrations—ball-trick, scarf-exercise, and so forth. The vivid effect of such a picture in such a setting was unique. Torchlight by moonlight; the bustling shore and the torpid lake; on the one hand mountains, a pure placid sky, and a soft fresh breeze; on the other, rouge, tinsel, spangles, the monotonous dance-tune, and the faded columbine poised on the rope in mid-air. The strangeness of the scene riveted the Englishman for a moment.

His son was now tugging at his arm again, and trying to draw him into the ring of spectators, exclaiming eagerly,

‘I say, look—do look at the little tiny girl with the fiddle!’

The ‘orchestra,’ stationed under a tree opposite, numbered four performers, two of whom were mere children. The leader was a small girl of seven or eight years old, scantily dressed in quaint quasi-Oriental fashion, whose infantile flourishes and feats of execution on her instrument, and particularly the energy with which she set to work, elicited repeated applause from the laughing crowd. Certainly the precocious skill she displayed was sufficiently extraordinary, and even Mr. Romer must notice, with passing wonder, the nimbleness and flexibility of the little thing’s fingers, the correctness of her intonation, and her spirited attempts at *bravura* passages on a toy violin, probably picked up for a few francs at a fair.

Presently the dancer came down from the tight-rope, and the music ceased. Loud acclamations followed, chiefly directed at the

child-fiddler, who was summoned by the master of the troupe, and sent round to collect pence in the tambourine.

She was not a pretty child. That is, not a trace of plump, round, fair, rosy prettiness was hers. But her well-cast face, thin, but not puny, pale, but not sallow, still retained the refinement of childhood, the purity of outline intact. A very few years and it must needs become coarse and hardened, like that of her mistress the rope-dancer; but the features, as yet, might have belonged to a little princess. Only the countenance wore a painfully constrained look, unnatural and overgrave for a child.

‘Poor little thing! what a life! what a fate!’ muttered Mr. Romer compassionately; but sentiment in him was tempered by the resignation of a philosopher comfortably off, and a successful man of the world. Unconsciously he grasped his son’s hand more firmly as he turned away, adding aloud, ‘Come, Val, we must get home, or we shall have our guests arriving before us.’

But first, at an urgent whisper from Val, he gave him a large silver coin to drop into the tambourine. Reluctantly the boy submitted to be led away. His father had company coming that night, and Val hated company. Besides, he was longing to stay and watch that funny little girl in the nondescript fancy dress.

The mountebanks went on with their entertainment. Now it was the clown, in an orange-coloured suit embroidered with black dromedaries, who came forward to tickle the crowd with stale jokes, bad puns, and repartees. Tumblers succeeded the clown, performing poodles the tumblers, and so on through all the dreary fun of a third-rate acrobatic troupe. Mean-

while the toy-fiddler kept up the same spirited accompaniment on the toy-fiddle, with the same unflagging energy and ludicrous gravity.

'*Cospetto*, a clever monkey that!' remarked one bystander to his neighbour. 'She'll be worth a pretty penny to her master one of these days.'

'Poor little devil! He looks a rough customer. I wager he leads those brats a fine life. Well done, *bambina*!' as the child wound up with a pluckily-executed flourish. 'Did you hear that? It's a prodigy!'

'She must have been put to it in her cradle,' responded the other.

'Eh? Look there! Why, she's going on the rope now, by Jupiter—fiddle and all!' and their attention redoubled.

As he spoke, the master of the troupe, a most unprepossessing-looking human creature, with a low forehead, shaggy eyebrows, and predatory stamp of countenance recalling certain animals of the baser sort, going up to the little girl, gave some peremptory order, motioning her forwards, and pointing to the rope.

Instead of obeying, she laid down her violin, seated herself on the stump of a tree, and folded her hands with a look of mute obstinate defiance.

'Come, quick; your turn!' he uttered impatiently, in an undertone.

She did not stir.

'Are you deaf?' angrily. 'Up with you!'

'I sha'n't,' she said, in a rebellious whisper.

'Not?' he repeated, muttering an oath, but with a look more of provocation than surprise. 'How dare you? Why the devil do you behave to me like this?'

'Because I'm afraid.'

'You little fool, I'll let you

know what to be afraid of!' he retorted savagely, but still speaking low, so that the crowd who witnessed the dialogue never suspected its amiable purport. 'No nonsense! What the plague possesses you to play this trick on me again to-night?'

'I'm tired, and I hate it, and I won't. You can't make me.'

'Can't I?' He took hold of her shoulder roughly. 'Up with you this moment, or I—'

'Look here, Baltazar, if you don't let me go, I'll lie down and scream.'

'O the little viper!' he hissed between his teeth, but relinquishing his hold; for he knew that the child would be as good as her word, knew, moreover, that—as she too was perfectly well aware—if she did make an outcry the spectators would interfere and take her part. So he swallowed his rage and made a hasty sign to his wife the rope-dancer, who repeated her gymnastic feats to the satisfaction of the crowd, none of whom noticed how the little girl, who had taken up her fiddle again, had turned quite white.

'Renza, you naughty silly thing!' whined the small boy who stood next her and beat the drum, in a plaintive sing-song tone. 'Aren't you afraid? Don't you see he's in such a passion? He'll kill you.'

'Not he,' said the child firmly; but her hand shook nervously as she fiddled on. 'Why, he wouldn't dare. He'd get himself into trouble.'

'But why will you never do as he bids you?'

'Because I'm afraid to go on the rope; and I hate it, and I hate him. He stole me, and has no right to make me do as he pleases.'

Renza's insubordination to the powers that be sheerly frightened

the wits out of her comrade, who, wiser in his generation, thought only of the consequences, the immediate consequences. Baltazar was a brutal violent man, and, as such, accustomed to meet with as abject submission from his human dependents as from his poodles. Renza was the single living thing in that caravan that ever ventured to oppose him. It was not the first time; and Baltazar swore to himself it must be the last.

The performance over, the crowd dispersed, and the mountebanks strolled off to a tavern at the back of the village to supper and sleep, carrying with them their belongings. The two children, leading a bulldog that was harnessed to the drum, a fixture on wheels, brought up the rear.

'Keep yourselves out of the way to-night,' whispered the master's wife—a good-natured woman, who was always kind to the children in her way—warningly to Renza, as the party collected in front of the inn. 'You've put him into a fine rage this time, I can tell you. Go and sleep, you and Lollo. Perhaps, if he sees neither of you again to-night, he'll have forgotten about it by the morning; and, thrusting them aside, she contrived to screen them as Baltazar lounged up. She then followed the rest into the inn, leaving the two children outside in the dark, where they loitered under the windows of the rough eating-room.

Easy to say, 'Go and sleep;' but Renza and Lollo had tasted nothing since the early morning, and '*Qui dort, dine*' was a maxim not at all to their mind.

Renza might have borne it in silence, but Lollo, who had not the faintest Spartan touch about him, overcome presently by the tantalising sight and smell of the steaming macaroni and polenta

within, on which his heart was set, began to cry helplessly at the situation. He knew better than to venture in alone.

Baltazar, finding Renza not to be worked upon by threats or their execution, had lately hit on the infernal expedient of involving her comrade in the consequences of her disobedience—a measure that had met with some success. The child was puzzled to death. If only Lollo would fearlessly have stood by her, resisted the injustice, and shared all hardships sooner than give in! as Renza secretly thought that he ought, and as she undoubtedly would have done in his place. But Lollo was no hero, alas! He was fond of Renza, but more than once had reproached her bitterly for bringing down penalties on his innocent head by her scrapes. Such an outburst threatened her now; she was ravenously hungry herself besides; all helped to embolden her.

'Let us go in,' she whispered suddenly. 'Perhaps he won't see us; perhaps he has half-forgotten already, or means to let me have my own way, and not dance.'

She took Lollo's hand, and the pair stole in through the doorway. The troupe were seated at a long wooden table. Baltazar was at one end drinking wine. His back was towards the children. They sidled up to his wife, who, trusting it might escape notice in the ill-lighted room, responded by handing them furtively a slice of polenta, with a hasty sign to them to flee.

'Stop that!' snarled the chief, who had turned; 'I won't have it.'

'Eh, what d'ye mean? Aren't they to have supper?' she asked, feigning surprise, but withdrawing her hand very quickly. 'Come, there's no use in starving them,' she ventured timidly.

'Just you hold your tongue,' he retorted violently. 'Do any of you think I mean to let a chit like that make a fool of me a second time? Get out with you both,' to the children.

He was in a tremendous passion; the sight of Renza made him mad, but he had sense enough left to wish her gone out of his reach, lest in his exasperation he should forget himself before more witnesses than was prudent.

All the troupe were afraid for her; but not a man of them had a mind to interfere, aware how easily opposition from his subordinates could do away in Baltazar with those few qualities that made of him a man and not a brute.

When, to the utter consternation of all present, Renza marched straight up to the master, saying with emphasis,

'It is *not fair*. Lollo has done nothing at all, and you have *no right* to be angry with him. It is wicked to treat him so, and it is of no use; for if you do I never, *never* will give in!'

'The child's crazy!' was gasped with one accord round the table; and in truth Renza, in her passion of indignation and revolt against Baltazar's injustice and oppression, was raised to such a frenzy of excitement as to forget of what her tyrant was capable when provoked.

'Come here,' he said. She did not stir. He rose, caught hold of her hair with his left hand, and with his right aimed a cuff that would have knocked her down; but the landlord, who was standing by and had no liking for such a scene under his roof, arrested his arm, saying promptly,

'Let the child alone. I can't have this sort of thing here.'

'Why, she's my property; I bought her; and a man may do

what he likes with his own,' he retorted fiercely. But he let go his hold, and pushed her away with a short laugh and muttered threat of vengeance deferred, which Renza, however, did not stop to hear. She had fled from the room with Lollo, who was blessing the holy saints for his escape, and also that he had managed to pick up and carry off a large slice of polenta.

They shared it in the thatched loft of a shed that had been assigned them as a sleeping-place. But Renza found she had lost her appetite in her excitement, as they sat there on the hay in the moonlight, munching the maize-bread and talking in whispers.

'Lollo,' said Renza, 'let us get ready and make haste. I'm going to run away.'

'Not to-night, Renza; only not to-night!'

Often and often they had talked of it, and made up their minds to the step. Then, when the moment for action came, it was always Lollo who hung back.

'They are all busy drinking; we sha'n't be seen or heard; no one will find out we are gone till to-morrow morning.'

'Don't leave me alone, dear Renza, and in the dark!' he pleaded miserably.

'Why, of course I shall take you with me,' she answered, surprised.

'But where shall we go?'

'I don't know. Where *he* will never find us. Don't cry, Lollo, but come along.'

Lollo shook his head. 'I can't, Renza; I don't dare. We shall only be found out and brought back again, and then Baltazar will treat us worse than ever. I don't know what he mightn't do to me if we ran away. Don't talk about it, Renza; I have been punished enough for you already.'

He was not half so bad to me before you came.'

Renza was silent, cut to her little heart by his reproach. It was too bad of Lollo, she thought, ungenerous, cowardly, to taunt her, as it were, with Baltazar's cruelty. She sat still on the hay, her polenta untouched on her lap, staring before her at the opening, where the moonbeams played on the leaves and tendrils of the gourd that grew all over the shed.

Lollo, tired out, lay down, and in a few minutes went off to sleep. But meantime Renza took her resolve. Never before had she realised that her comrade could desert her thus. It was very selfish of him, she thought. Perhaps he would not even miss her; perhaps he would be glad when she was gone. She had quite decided that go she must, even now that it had come to starting off by herself, she knew not whither, in the dead of night. Excitement gave her nerve for the venture. She waited till she heard the little boy breathe hard, and then rose suddenly, forgetting in her absorption that she had not changed her clothes, as she had meant to do, but was still in her threadbare theatrical finery.

The moon shone full into Lollo's sleeping face. She stooped down and gave it a kiss, then turned her back on him, grasping her little fiddle in her hand. That was her own, and went with her of course. Noiselessly she crept down the ladder. The bulldog, crouched under the drum in a corner of the shed below, growled lazily, but Renza fed him with the remains of her polenta, and quieted him with soft childish whispers and caresses. All silent in the tavern, except in the dining-room, where some of the men were drinking still, and others lay

snoring on the benches. Keeping in the shadow of the wall she stole off by a narrow stone causeway that led out of the village, and brought her quickly into the chestnut woods behind, on the heights bordering the lake.

Once there she flew, like a startled bird, along the footpath before her, nor slackened her speed till forced to stop for breath.

Already she had shot far beyond Stresa. That was well. She started off again, passed the skirts of the next village unmolested. A belated peasant in the woods who saw her go by, frightened out of his life at the strange little white figure, shrank back, crossing himself with a shudder and a prayer to the Madonna, glad when it vanished in the darkness like a sprite or a goblin, that no doubt it was.

It was only ten o'clock, but for Renza the very witching hour of night.

The courage that had defied Baltazar failed her utterly against the terrors of her own imagination. Lizards rustled in the grass making her shrink and shiver; the gnarled branches took unearthly shapes, and the moonbeams played ugly tricks with the foliage. The insane dread of wild animals that haunts children tormented her now; those thick black chestnut groves were a likely harbour for wolves, she thought,—and half fancied she saw their gleaming eyes,—ready to dart out and spring upon her.

She hugged her fiddle closer, clinging to it as fondly as might another child to its pet doll. It gave her a feeling of protection, of companionship, at all events. Her skirts were torn to shreds by the brambles, her shoes wet through with the dew; but she trudged on bravely, urged by her one fixed

idea,—to put as great a distance as possible that night between Baltazar and herself.

She had run miles, it seemed to her. But she was growing tired and faint, and presently came to a halt, leaning against the wicker-gate of the gardens of a villa on the edge of the wood, laid out on the slopes descending to the lake. A garden full of flowering trees and sweet-smelling shrubs, intersected by winding gravel-paths, and with a thread of a stream running through and forming a mimic waterfall over some natural rock-work.

Close by the gate was a rustic summer-house, with benches—such a nice place to rest in, thought Renza. How if she were to curl up and go to sleep there for ten minutes?

She slipped through the gate. But already the proposed nap was forgotten. From the lower windows of the villa opposite, a flood of light streamed across the garden. But what rivetted the child was the sound of music that had caught her ear. She listened entranced. Only a piano, a sweet voice, and a pretty waltz. But it was long since Renza had heard anything so bewitching as that, anything better, indeed, than the scraping of her own violin-strings.

At last she pattered down the path towards the windows. Screened by a clump of feathery Pampas grass, she peeped in. The glimpse dazzled her outright. The bright silk hangings, the mirrors, Venetian glass chandeliers, marbled cabinets, grand piano, and the gay dresses of the ladies of the assembly formed so fascinating a picture that Renza forgot everything else, and the next moment stood flattening her nose against the window.

The next, the company were

startled out of their musical ecstasies by a loud scream from one of the ladies present.

She was a nervous Italian, who in answer to the concerned inquiries of the rest could only point to the window, where a wild-looking little face was distinctly visible, pressed against the glass.

It was a spectre, she said. A thief, said another. A third, less imaginative, remarked that it was only a dirty little beggar-girl.

'Tell the ragamuffin to sheer off,' said the loud English voice of the master of the house, to the servant who had been summoned to the rescue.

Here Renza, who was too bewildered to run away, suddenly met a pair of honest blue eyes peering at her through the glass.

'Papa,' cried a boyish voice, 'why if it isn't the same little girl-fiddler we saw on the beach to-night?'

The British butler stood at the door, making signs to Renza to decamp, flapping his arms as if at intrusive hens and chickens. But Val, brusquely opening the window, took hold of her hand and pulled her in.

There she stood, with the light streaming full upon her, in the midst of the assemblage, the queerest little figure imaginable in her limp and ragged parti-coloured tunic, spangled jacket and cap, and with her fiddle tucked under her arm.

Everybody was laughing at the awkwardness of the English boy. But he did not let go her hand, and Renza was grasping his tightly with instinctive confidence.

'How did you come here, little thing?' he asked gently, bending down to speak to her.

Renza replied fast and low; and Val repeated to the rest:

'She's run away. She belongs to some strolling players. Her

master was cruel to her, and she would not stay with him.'

'Is it a true story, I wonder?' asked the lady who had screamed, incredulously. She had not forgiven Renza the panic she had caused her.

'Well, she looks thin and starved enough,' observed Mr. Romer. 'But what possessed her to come here, I should like to know?'

'She only ran to the window to have a look,' continued her champion promptly. 'She didn't mean to frighten you or to beg, and she wants you to let her go. That's what she says.'

'Can she give us a tune on that machine?' asked a young Italian fop, who was regarding the child and her plaything curiously through his eyeglass. 'Tell her to play us something, and then she may go to the devil or wherever she likes.'

Renza's face brightened. She supposed they must be angry, and was at her wits' end how to conciliate them. So she put her fiddle in tune, and without a moment's hesitation began to play over the air she had just heard from the garden, and that still haunted her head.

It was fine fun for the audience. The squeaking toy, the gravity and earnestness with which the child handled it, provoked fits of half-suppressed laughter. But again Mr. Romer was struck by the dexterity displayed, and still more by the extreme intelligence of her countenance.

'Where did you pick up that air, child?' asked one of the ladies, as she concluded.

'Outside in the garden five minutes ago,' Renza explained.

'You never heard it before?'

'O, never!'

'What a fib!' laughed the fair sceptic, who took a month to get a popular song by heart.

'No,' Mr. Romer interposed, 'the valse was composed by our friend, Signor Allori here, expressly for our *fête* to-night, and is not printed. The child speaks the truth.'

'Wonderful!' was now the cry on all sides. Renza, an importunate beggar-brat but a moment before, was suddenly exalted into an infant prodigy. The reaction was too much for the little thing's over-taxed nerves. So long as those faces looked askance suspiciously, or laughed at her, the instinct of self-defence had held her up. But now that they relented, smiled, and the ladies spoke to her in caressing tones and patted her cheek, and the need for fighting was gone, she found herself turning giddy and faint, and would have fallen, but Mr. Romer supported her with his arm.

'She's hungry, I expect,' he said cheerfully. 'When did you have dinner, child?'

'I went without. Baltazar, the master, made me, because I was tired and wouldn't go on the rope.'

A storm of boundless indignation! 'What a monster! Incredible! Poor dear, little angel! How horrible!' cried the ladies in chorus.

It was the *coup de grâce* for Renza. She was on the point of bursting out crying, when Mr. Romer broke in, saying kindly,

'There, there. Val, take the child into the next room and get her some supper. Then tell Marietta to put her to bed somewhere. We'll see to-morrow what's to be done with her.'

Gravely and carefully the boy conducted his charge into the supper-room, where the table was spread with the ruins of what had been a feast.

The moment she had tasted

some morsels she revived, and looked up at her protector with bright grateful eyes. He was a big boy, twice as big as herself, more rough in appearance, and more gentle and kind in his manner than any one she had ever met. He had a funny round face like a full moon, that made her want to laugh, but that would be rude. He was taciturn and shy, and directly he got beyond the simplest sentences she could not understand more than a word here and there of his bad Italian. So he contented himself with patronising her and judiciously selecting what he thought would be best for her to eat.

Renza remembered no more. Overcome by sleep she could no longer hold up her head, and Val, feeling extremely manly, carried her up-stairs to Marietta. When she woke up it was light, and she was lying comfortably in bed in a strange room.

She sat up in a maze. There was her little fiddle lying on the quilt at her feet. Then she recollected everything.

'Baltazar will never find me here,' she thought gladly, and went off to sleep again at once.

CHAPTER II.

THE GOLDEN AGE ENDED.

MR. ROMER was a self-made man. Born in the humblest condition of life, he had made himself very rich by the manufacture of soft soap. He still derived his large income from the business, which, however, he had ceased to superintend in person. The death of his young wife a few years back had told so severely on his health and spirits, that, abandoning the good principles to which he owed

his commercial success, he had allowed the active management to fall into the hands of his partner, though still remaining nominal head of the firm.

Again, since the shock of his loss, a growing aversion to England and English life led him to spend a larger part of each successive year at the villa he had purchased in happier times on the Lago Maggiore, the favourite residence of his wife, and the birth-place of his son.

It had other less sentimental attractions for him. Mr. Romer, though theoretically proud of his low origin, had, in fact, never felt comfortable in his position at home as a *parvenu* in the upper classes of society. In Italy his relations with his neighbours were more frank and pleasant. He was accepted for what he was—a rich, agreeable, hospitable Englishman, and, as such, welcome to all, not excepting a few decayed, or at least penurious, noble families. Whether Mr. Romer, when he was at home, were a lineal descendant of the Plantagenets or the son of a drayman was no matter to them. Not that they ignored class-distinctions. But it was enough that they should conscientiously observe them among their own people; and so long as the drayman's son was a foreigner, they did not feel as if they were committing themselves to levelling principles by associating with him on equal terms.

Mr. Romer's foible was fine art. Much love with little culture had now and then led him astray. More than once he had been imposed upon by vamped-up old masters, spurious old plate and china. But even connoisseurs make mistakes; and his patronage was at least dictated by honest and generous motives. Renza had

fallen into good hands. Had she been the most unpromising little sprig of pauperism alive, he would none the less, now she had been thrown thus in his way, have done something to better her lot. As it was, his interest disposed him to take some trouble about her,—to act patron, if it should come to that, in good earnest.

The next morning her future was decided. Mr. Romer himself went over to Stresa, saw Baltazar, and proposed to take Renza off his hands. In consideration of the sum offered, her master, after much feigned hesitation, agreed to sacrifice, not his interest only—that was a trifle—but his affection for the child, which he protested was as great as though she were his own. He could shed tears, he swore, at the thought of parting with her. He did not, however, but pocketed the cash and went off overjoyed at having got rid, and at such a profit, of a contumacious pupil, who had cost him more trouble during the short year her apprenticeship had lasted than anything that had ever had the misfortune to be under him, and of whose training, so as to become a useful member of his regiment, he was beginning to despair.

It had, indeed, begun too late. Renza, or Laurence Therval, was the daughter of a French bandmaster, who earned a precarious living as musician-in-chief to the obscure town in Dauphiné, where Providence had placed and poverty forced him to stay. Of her mother, an Italian by birth, she had no remembrance; her father had been everything to her—nurse, parent, tutor, and playfellow—throughout her early childhood. He taught her music, and the violin, on which he himself was a fair performer, and made it the promise of his life that his little girl, of whose genius he had proof

and plenty, should enjoy those opportunities and win those laurels which his straitened circumstances had long forbidden him to dream of for himself. Those were happy years for both, till one memorable hard winter came, when most of the poor working people in the town fell ill, many died, among them the bandmaster, and Laurence was left to the tender mercies of an old woman who had kept Therval's house.

The dame grumbled without ceasing at the charge; her avaricious soul deeming the slender provision, which was all the father had been able to make, insufficient payment for the trouble and expense of rearing his orphan child. Not six months after his death Laurence had been—not stolen, as she imagined—but sold to the mountebanks who were performing in the neighbourhood. Baltazar chanced to pass as she was playing the violin out of doors one holiday afternoon to the delight of a troupe of gaping schoolfellows. Here was a golden mine for him indeed, a treasure-trove on which he judged it safe to speculate. So he discovered her guardian, and went and made offers that seemed handsome to the old crone, who closed with them at once, merely stipulating that, as she had a reputation amongst her neighbours for piety, which might suffer were it known how she had apprenticed her charge, the transaction should be kept secret.

Lollo was employed to decoy the child away under the promise of a ride in the cart, whose gay trappings had excited her admiration. The ride was long; Laurence went to sleep, and awoke to find herself well over the frontier among strange masters in a strange land. The report that the mountebanks had stolen the little girl

was spread and believed in her native town, where, as she had neither kith nor kin to make a stir, the incident ere long was forgotten.

Baltazar soon half-repented his bargain. A child who could not, by the elementary means of alternate sugar-plums and cuffs, be made a machine to do his bidding was a thing of which he had no experience, and regarded as a kind of monster. The lazy troupe under him, whose one idea was to save themselves trouble and keep him in a decent humour by absolute acquiescence, had little sympathy with the restiveness of the new pupil, which they supposed would have to be knocked out of her somehow, though they pitied the child, and were kind to her in their rough way.

But to Laurence, who by her father had not only been petted and adored, but treated almost as an equal and encouraged to think and act for herself, the change was like being sold into slavery of the worst. She did not cry or complain. Something told her it was of no use. But every day her sensitive independent nature revolted afresh against the coarse manners of her companions and the wanton tyranny of their chief. She would not reconcile herself to their ways, nor adopt them, nor without stout resistance be drilled into the dull puppet they wanted to make of her.

Thence resulted collisions hitherto unheard of in the troupe, and exhibitions of Baltazar at his worst. But the child showed an astonishing power of physical and mental resistance, an almost indomitable pluck, that sustained her throughout months of hardship and rough-usage that would have overcome the nature and broken the spirit of another.

And now that was all over;

she had found the friends and protectors she had never ceased to dream of during that rude year of captivity. Her firm faith in such a deliverance, and which had gone far to keep up her heart to the end, had been fulfilled at last.

Mr. Romer put her to lodge with the gardener and his wife, a worthy Italian couple who lived in an outhouse attached to the villa. An old Milanese violin-professor who came over weekly to give Val music-lessons in the holidays was henceforth to teach her also. A new, a real violin was given her, and she was free to devote her days and nights to it if she chose.

It was paradise come again! But it was Renza's way to take the goodness of the world for granted ingenuously, and resent its opposites as unnatural, things to be waged war against unrelentingly. She was in no danger of having her head turned by Mr. Romer's benevolence, but her heart was none the less grateful; and she was unconsciously rewarding him in the way he most desired—by an increasing devotion to music in general, the violin in particular, and progress in proportion.

Her master was in raptures. Poor Val! How hopelessly did he find himself distanced! The child had been ahead of him in musical knowledge before she could walk, as an unfledged nightingale has the advantage of the most accomplished piping bullfinch. However, with her help, he managed to get on rather better than before; but his fingers, dexterous enough in other ways—nay, he had a knack for drawing and modelling that rather alarmed his father—were all thumbs on the keyboard. There was an organ at the villa. Laurence

soon mastered that, and it was Mr. Romer's chief delight to make her play to him in the evenings.

The months while he was away were months of solitude for Renza. Girls who have had grown-up people for their companions do not readily herd with their girl-contemporaries afterwards. But every year Mr. Romer's absences became shorter, and he more wedded to his Italian *villeggiatura*.

During the holidays Laurence and Val were inseparable. They made an odd pair. What fellowship had the rough, shrewd, matter-of-fact boy with a child of so dreamy and sensitive a temperament as hers? But Val had a warm heart and a strong imagination, and to both of these did Laurence appeal as no one else that he knew. The boy was a good hater already. He hated what he called humbug,—trite pretensions, flashy distinctions, artificial manners, and cant of all sorts,—with a most inconvenient frankness and zeal. And he had the rarer quality of intense liking for the opposites of his favourite aversions. It was necessary, of course, for a man to rub shoulders with a vulgar, artificial world. But to come thence and be with Laurence and interchange ideas with her was like breathing the fresh pure air on a mountain top.

The fifth summer had come and gone, with its glowing suns, its soft south airs and delicate evenings. But though late in September, it was still in Italy the lazy season—the season when existence means enjoyment, so long as all exertion can be avoided.

The whole animal creation seemed of one mind on the point. Flocks and herds, birds and lizards, lay mute and motionless. Sufficient unto that leave-taking summer day was the sweetness thereof.

'Stop a bit, Laurence, do,' drawled Val sleepily; it was *his* leave-taking day also. 'Remember that this time to-morrow I shall be well on my way back to that *blessed* school!'

The two had been out since the early morning on one of their grand rambles that often lasted till dusk. Their favourite haunts were on the slopes of the Monte Motterone, among Spanish-chestnut woods and uplands of heather and fern, much like an English park, but far more exuberant in weed, flower, and tree growth. Never a living creature to be met with in these wilds, unless perhaps a stray donkey or a herd of black piga. Laurence's violin usually accompanied them on such expeditions; and when they had found a woodland settlement to their mind, she would sit down and play to Val and the desert air by the hour; whilst he amused himself in carving wooden figures and toys for her, sketching rough caricatures in chalk, and other busy-idle ways.

It was too sultry for that even this afternoon, and he lay reclined at full length on a low stone wall with his eyes shut. Laurence, who sat beside him with her feet dangling down, had been playing over a violin romance to herself very softly whilst the sun dropped behind the woods.

'I like that thing,' muttered Val presently. 'Who built it?'

'Beethoven,' she replied. 'I thought you were asleep.'

'So I was; counting your wrong notes on my fingers, in my dreams, I promise you.'

'Were there so many?' she asked.

'Whynone, you goose, of course,' he said, laughing. 'Sometimes, when I've got my eyes shut, I can't believe my ears that it's you playing, you little mite!'

Val was now a big boy of sixteen, more uncouth than ever, with a broad head, and tawny hair that *would* look shaggy however short he had it cropped, and bearing a general likeness to a good-tempered lion-cub.

The girl was a slight creature indeed by his side, though she had shot up quickly in height these last years. Her face had altered little. It was not pretty yet, but points were there with sure promise of future fascination; long eyebrows, finely drawn, imperceptibly arched, firm delicately moulded lips, and pale transparent colouring.

'What were you thinking of, Laurence,' he demanded, 'whilst you were scraping away just now?'

'I wasn't thinking, I was fancying. I always do when I play that. Fancying myself back home.'

'Home?'

'My old home in France. *Père* used to play to me in the evenings. That was my favourite, because of a story he told me about it. How once he went all the way to Paris to hear Araciél, who, he said, was the greatest violinist living. But *père* was so poor, and the tickets cost—O, more than twenty francs; so he had to walk half the way to save the money for the concert. And when he did get to Paris it was too late, for all the places were sold. But what do you think *père* did? The concert was at the palace of some prince, and *père* gave his ticket money to one of the servants to let him put on his livery. So *père* was able to go in, and stood by the door of the concert-room, and the prince and everybody was listening to the music, so he was not found out. Then *père* would take his violin and say, "Now I will try

and play you the *Romance* as Araciél played it." That was such a nice story! and I used to make *père* tell it me over and over again.'

'How jolly you must have been in those old times!' said Val, suppressing a groan.

'I should think so!' she exclaimed.

'And here you aren't,' he retorted crossly.

'Why, Val!' she exclaimed wonderingly, 'how can you say that?'

'Because you're always scudding back in your head to what used to be, half a dozen years ago, and though I try hard, I can't make you forget it.'

'Val,' she pleaded quaintly, 'I shouldn't like to forget things. Suppose you were to die, would you wish me to have forgotten all about you in six years?'

'Be so good as not to bother about what's to happen when I'm dead,' said Val, laughing. 'Come what may then, I won't hear you settle it all coolly beforehand.'

'And so,' he continued, more gently, by and by, 'you wouldn't forget all about me, Laurence, in six years?'

'No,' she cried indignantly. 'Not in sixty!'

'Sixty years!' repeated Val contemplatively, with a yawn. 'Let me see. Then you will be seventy-one. What will you look like, Laurence, by that time? Your hair will be all white, you know. Gracious me! that will look odd if it's a yard and a half long then, as it is now.'

Laurence's locks were a phenomenon of their kind, reaching, when let loose, down to her feet. The notion of such a head of hair in white made both laugh aloud.

'I don't care how I shall look,' said Laurence stoutly. 'When I'm old I mean to keep a school

and teach the violin. And you, Val, what shall you do?

'There's so much that's hateful to come first,' he muttered. 'Two years more at this wretched school, and then papa will have me go to the University. There's five years wasted! After that I shall do as I like.'

'Professor Alloris says I've studied enough with him now and ought to learn from Nielsen,' said Laurence thoughtfully. 'But then he's settled in Germany, at Bleiburg, where the great Musical School is.'

'And there papa means to send you,' quoth Val, getting crosser and crosser, 'and there you'll stick, I expect, till you "come out." Then you'll get famous, and have laurel crowns and bouquets by the bushel, and so on.'

Laurence was silent; her father had been fond of repeating to her that it was of no use to think of such things, and made her promise never to do so. She was reminded of that now.

'Goodness knows if I shall ever see you then,' continued Val, so morosely that Laurence was concerned.

'Couldn't you pay me a visit sometimes,' she suggested, 'to see how I was getting on?'

'As if that would be enough! Why, I should want to see you every day, and be together as much as we are now.'

'But that will be impossible.'

'Why?'

'Because you will be a rich man, and I shall always be very poor, like *père*.'

'No, Laurence,' said Val eagerly, 'you might marry me, you know, when we're grown up, and then everything I had would be yours too.'

Laurence was silent. Val was always 'chaffing.' But this time he spoke more gravely than usual.

'Won't you, Laurence,' he persisted, 'when you're eighteen or twenty? Don't laugh. I'm not laughing, but in very serious earnest. I don't like one of my school-fellows half as well as you. You're worth more than the lot of them, though you are a girl.'

Such praise was delicious. Still Laurence felt at a loss what to say to Val's proposition, which she was considering.

'And then,' he continued, 'we can go on living here with my father. Wouldn't you like that?'

She looked perplexed. The idea struck her as so funny that she wanted to laugh, but felt Val would not like that. Yet he was generally the one to scoff, she to be serious.

'Say you will!' he urged impatiently.

'Yes, I will marry you, Val,' said the child with the utmost gravity, 'when—'

'When what?'

'When you are a great man.'

'Whew!' Val felt rather crest-fallen. He had been brought up to look forward to being a rich man—quite another thing. Evidently Laurence wanted to get out of it.

'Why, you might have to wait for that till I was seventy-one,' said he, jumping up with a laugh, much to Laurence's relief. She was very tender-hearted, and feared she had hurt his feelings by not giving an unconditional acceptance.

But Val did not mean to regard her decision as final. The child had acquired a strange hold over his young thoughts and affections; and any scheme of life without her would at that time have seemed to him hopelessly uninteresting. The pair sauntered slowly homewards. Val was in his merriest mood—all jokes and nonsense. Laurence caught his

gaiety; the woods rang with their laughter, and they reached the villa in a wild state of spirits. Yet Val had not forgotten their previous dialogue. Nor was he to forget it. The memory of that evening, down to the minutest particulars, was to be burnt into his mind for ever.

It was dusk, and Val was surprised not to see lights in the front windows as usual. Perhaps his father had not yet come home from his walk. The trio generally took a late supper, Italian fashion. Laurence ran round to the lodge to put her violin to bed, and Val marched indoors alone.

The drawing-room was very dark; but there was his father sitting in the easy chair, asleep, thought Val, and he went up to wake him.

He had scarcely touched his shoulder, and faintly discerned the expression of his countenance, when a thrill of dread shot through him. This was not sleep.

Val rang violently and shouted for help. The servants came rushing in, to find their master helpless and insensible; he had had a stroke of some kind.

Val knew nothing of illness. His father had been ailing lately, but not so as to cause any uneasiness. Staggered and sickened by the sudden calamity, the boy looked wildly round for a clue.

There were letters on the floor. A paper, which Mr. Romer had been grasping at the moment when he lost consciousness, had just fallen from his hand.

It was a telegram. Val seized it, with a mad notion that it might help him to know what to do.

Something wrong with the business. He caught up one of the letters, and so much he managed to make out—that a

terrible catastrophe was imminent. A clerk, wrongfully trusted with full powers by the acting partner, had absconded with a large amount of money; and for years, as it now transpired, had been robbing the firm and falsifying the accounts. Everything was in irretrievable confusion. The partner—implicated, or too cowardly to meet the exposure—had left the country, it was supposed for America.

The utter ruin, for it was nothing less, the shade cast on his name—in a word, the full brunt of the misfortune Val never took in till afterwards. He was absorbed by a more pressing anxiety. Let but his father recover, he thought, and all would go well.

Mr. Romer died that night, never having recovered consciousness so far as to know his son. The shock of the news, the tardily-realised sense of personal culpability,—his growing indolence having led him to ignore responsibility, neglect faint warnings of approaching complications, and to postpone inquiry till too late,—this, coming on an enfeebled constitution, was more than enough to cause the seizure from which he never rallied.

Val was half-stunned by the blow. And this severe initiation into the hardships of life was no more than the key-note of an altered future.

His uncle came over to settle affairs. He was a well-meaning but ill-seeming man, harsh, and narrow-minded—a poor relation to whom there was something not displeasing in the reverses of the wealthy in general, and of his rich brother-in-law in particular. In the bankrupt's son he saw only an idle youngster brought up to be a gentleman and a scapegrace, but who would now have to know that there are those who must work if they would live.

Val cordially detested him from the first moment.

He was going to be kind to the lad, to do the right thing by him. But how inexpressibly painful to the boy was the right thing—all else indeed at that moment!

The villa to be sold and all its contents! Mr. Romer's whole property, it was found, would barely cover his liabilities. Val was thrust on the world empty-handed. His uncle, who was a solicitor in London, proposed to take him into his office as clerk at once. Val agreed, of course. At least he would not have to live on charity, even for a day.

But Laurence?

That was the worst of all. When Val broached the subject to his uncle, entreating that something might be done to provide for the child, he was met by the retort that, when money had been got together to pay his father's debts, it would be time to think of settling his pensioners. Val ground his teeth with rage, but he was speechless.

Every servant belonging to the villa had been turned off; the gardener and his wife had removed to Stressa, taking Laurence with them; but she was informed she would now have to shift for herself. The child, too bewildered by the changes and disasters of the last few weeks to think of the future at first, had but just begun to realise that she was homeless and adrift.

One evening—not so many days since she and Val had been building castles in the air on the Monte Motterone—as Laurence sat alone in the dreary lodging at Stressa, casting about in her mind what she could do, where she could go, and finding nothing, the door burst open, and Val rushed in violently.

'Laurence!' and they were in each other's arms, half crying with excitement.

'I *would* come,' said Val. 'Vowed I'd not leave the place till I'd seen you. I've settled it all, Laurence. You are to go to Germany—to Bleiburg. I've seen Allori, and it's all right. I've arranged everything with him.'

Laurence listened amazed. Val seated himself on the table, and went on:

'There is a girl-pupil he knows who is starting for the Musical School there on Monday, and she and you can travel together. When you get to Bleiburg you are to go to Professor Nielsen with this letter from Allori. He says he is sure that man can help you, and will upon the recommendation he has given. It is the best he can do for you.'

'But—' began Laurence doubtfully.

'O, I forgot,' said Val, in his blundering way. 'You'll want some money of course for the first year or two, and here it is.' He produced a little roll of notes and unfolded it with some pride, whilst Laurence opened her eyes very wide. 'Fifty pounds,' he said triumphantly. Then as she drew back he insisted peremptorily 'O you may, you *must* take it! In the first place, the money's my own; it was my present last birthday, and was to stand me a pony, you know, against next holidays. But it's yours by rights, ten times over. You were to have had—' He broke off abruptly, brushed his hand over his eyes, and resumed, 'I had forgotten all about it till the other day, when I came upon it by accident, and was so glad, because of you.'

'Val, how good of you!' she exclaimed, her face lighting up, as he continued,

'That morning, who should

come over but Allori, to wish me good-bye, and ask what had become of you. I settled it all in my head in a minute. We talked it over, and he's going to write to you himself. This girl who's to take you to Bleiburg starts from Milan, and will pick you up here. The diligence calls at Stresa, you know. Five or six pounds out of this will be enough for your journey. The rest is to be sent to the bank at Bleiburg, and you can get it there at any time after you arrive by presenting a paper I shall send you before I go. It is the safest way, I hear. You must be very economical, Laurence. Then after the first year or so you might be able to give lessons and earn something for yourself.'

'But you, Val?' she asked anxiously.

'O, never mind me; I'm all right,' returned Val, but setting his teeth firmly as if against an absent enemy. 'I'm going to England to work. I'll not be a burden to anybody, I'm determined.'

Laurence looked at her playfellow with deference. In her heart she admired him more than ever before.

'I shall have to make my own way,' he said; 'but see if I don't get on, in spite of my uncle, who'll be disappointed, I believe, if I don't turn out the vagabond he takes me for. But O Laurence!' lapsing suddenly into a lamentable tone, 'it will be *frightful* never to see you!'

She tried to console him. They might write. Poor Val shook his head dolefully. He knew himself no correspondent. At least they would never forget each other, however far apart they might be.

But there were no pleasant dreams, no golden hopes to indulge in to-night. The future was all blank darkness for both. Yet, even now, their young heads could

not realise that this parting might be for ever, or that distance could present an insuperable barrier. Val had never heard of such a thing as being too poor to travel.

An hour afterwards he was gone. Laurence stood at the window alone. When he was out of sight her eyes turned instinctively to the table where lay her violin. That was her only friend now.

CHAPTER III.

UNCOMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS.

THE early dawn was just breaking when the lumbering diligence, bound for Switzerland, rolled into Stresa. Only one passenger to pick up: a child, with a violin case, and very little baggage else. They bundle her in, and rattle off again.

Laurence looked eagerly for her promised companion. A single inside traveller was just discernible in the gray twilight dozing in a corner of the stage-coach. Was it she? To Laurence the somebody appeared quite grown-up, as one who had already attained to young lady's estate. The damsel was fully formed, rounded, dimpled, without an angle, or crude or imperfect outline, anywhere. Slowly the daylight broke over her countenance. Was it not lovely? Such soft angelic features, brilliant colouring, thick coils of curly auburn hair, Laurence had never beheld, except in the paintings that adorned Mr. Romer's villa. She was well dressed, but rather showily for a journey, with a great display of watch-chain and châtelaine. Her gloves were off, showing two white little hands, inclined to be plump, and on one finger a shining gold ring with a ruby in it.

Now was this the poor orphan student whom charitable friends were helping to send to the Musical School?

She never woke till they had travelled some miles. Then she began to stir and to stretch, and sat up rubbing her eyes and sighing.

'Jesu Maria! How I ache, and how sleepy I am! Ah!' she ejaculated in surprise, on suddenly becoming aware of Laurence's presence. Turning a critical eye on the thin little girl with the plain black frock, straw hat, and violin case, she asked, 'Are you the child who is to travel with me to Bleiburg?'

'Yes; I got in at Stresa. You never heard me,' Laurence answered meekly.

'I was asleep. O, I cannot bear rising so early; it makes me miserable all day long. Will you sit on the opposite side, please, that I may lie down and take another nap?'

But first she took another long stare at her neighbour, thinking, not aloud, but plainly enough,

'What a little frump! Really I shall be ashamed to be seen with her. She's neat, certainly; but such an old-fashioned rig out I never saw in my life! Perhaps people will take her for my maid. I should like to be thought to be travelling with a maid.'

Laurence was thinking,

'How beautiful she is! She must be clever, and can't have much left to learn. I wonder what her study is!'

Her admiration, as undisguised as her companion's contempt, did not displease the latter. Soon finding further sleep impossible in the jolting vehicle, the young lady roused herself, and addressed Laurence amicably, this time in bad French, which she spoke with much ease and complacency.

'How old are you?'

'Twelve.'

'You don't look it. I am sixteen. I dare say you thought me older; people generally do. My professor told me all about you. You're not Italian; you are French.'

'From Dauphiné.'

'Ah, I perceived at once that your accent was not Parisian. I come from Velletri, near Rome, but my mother was an American, and I speak all languages. Both my parents are dead now, and Bruno my brother pays for my education. I have been ever so long at the Academy at Parma, and got all the best prizes. Now they are sending me to study two more years under Erlanger at Bleiburg to be finished,' she said, with an expressive little gesture of self-satisfaction.

'And then?' asked Laurence, gravely.

'Then I am to come out at the Opera, of course—the Grand Opera. Allori says I shall be one of the finest singers of the time, only I must become a better musician first. I don't see the necessity. However, I mean to try. I wish it was over, for I hate study,' she concluded, laughing. 'I long to appear in public; long for the day when Mademoiselle Linda Visconti will be famous once for all.'

'What a lovely name!' murmured Laurence.

'Do you like it? I wanted to call myself Minnie Lind, but they said that it would not do—that it would remind people—so we fixed on the other instead.'

'Then it's not a real name, after all?' said Laurence, disappointed.

'Well, no, not mine. But my parents christened me Marie Filomena—a name for a nun! They can never have thought of

my becoming an operatic artist, you know.'

'Can you speak English?' she resumed presently, lapsing into that language. 'I do, of course, quite easily. My mother always spoke it to me; she never could learn Italian. She was such a beautiful woman, my mother! They tell me I am just like her, but that I shall be more beautiful than ever she was.'

'You are more beautiful,' said Laurence, half bewildered by this flow of talk, but won by the sweet looks of her companion, 'than Beatrice Cenci's picture, by Guido, in the villa Rondinella.'

Linda smiled delighted. Who Messer Guido or Madam Beatrice might be was more than she knew, but she saw a tremendous compliment was implied, and could relish that. Finding her companion, whose quaint simplicity was mingled with not a little French grace, more to her mind than she had expected, she kept up a brisk dialogue with her till the next stoppage, when the influx of other travellers broke up their *tête-à-tête*.

Linda's manner underwent a sudden change. Without positively ignoring Laurence, she became so distant and cold, making such strenuous and laughable attempts at haughtiness, that the child, perplexed, and little dreaming of the purport of these manœuvres, was reduced to silence.

That was a long day; from Stresa to Magadino, at the head of the lake, thence away to the mountains and the pass of St. Gothard. But, as the coach-horses toiled slowly, wearily, up the road, Laurence's fancy was too busy for time to hang heavily. Everything was new. Above all, the unknown land she was bound for offered free play for speculation—Bleiburg, the school, and Profes-

sor Nielsen in particular. Laurence had a distinct vision of him already, based on a picture of Eli the high-priest—a venerable old man, with a white beard, and all dignity and benevolence, who would receive her as Mr. Romer had done, and be as willing to teach her as Allori. How hard she would work to satisfy him!

Waking from her day-dream, she found Mdlle. Linda Visconti busy improving her acquaintance with her opposite neighbour in the coach, a man Laurence had hardly noticed before. She noticed him now, with his sharp sparrowhawk's countenance, shiny black hair, bushy moustache, and gleaming row of white teeth. Nationality, doubtful. Was he handsome? was he hideous? That was doubtful too; but the child decided for the latter.

Their dialogue—the charm of it, at least—was unintelligible to her; but they seemed to amuse themselves highly. When, at noon, the travellers halted for a hurried meal at a little inn on the mountain pass, all traces of weariness had vanished from Linda's face, and her eyes were dancing in her head with spirits.

'Do you know that gentleman?' asked Laurence naïvely.

Dinner was over; the two girls stood waiting in the porch, whilst the post-horses were harnessed.

Linda shook her head. 'Never saw him before in my life. But he has been most attentive and agreeable. It was that made you think I knew him.'

'You talked so much,' said the child; and Linda laughed aloud at her simplicity.

'One doesn't treat one's fellow-passengers as if they were wild beasts. He told me all his history, and it is very interesting. He is a French nobleman and a political exile.'

'French?' repeated Laurence quickly. 'I'm sure he's not. When he spoke French to you just now, I could not understand him.'

'O, hush, you little goose!' as the patriot in question approached, smiling, to help Miss Linda into the diligence, and resume his post opposite her.

The conversation recommenced as before, a shower of complimentary speeches on his side, of arch repartees on hers. There was nothing, in her private opinion, like a little wayside flirtation for beguiling the long hours of a journey. Flattery, of any quality, from any quarter, at any time, was a dram she could neither refuse nor prevent from turning her head.

It was late when they halted at Airolo, on the Alpine pass, where the passengers alighted for the night. Linda wished her friend good-evening and *au revoir* for the morrow, then went into the inn, giving Laurence her bag and shawls to carry.

The two girls shared a room. The moment they were alone Linda's friendly manner returned, but she was still a little off her head, and went about laughing to herself, as she recalled the compliments she had received, and singing gaily,

'A maiden behold me, in bridal array,
All lowly and white, like the lilies in May.'

She stopped short in her polacca on catching sight of her companion. Laurence had just taken off her hat, and her hair, disordered by the journey, fell down in two thick plaits, reaching to her ankles.

'Mercy on us, child! what's that? It can never—' Running up, Linda gave the plait a strong pull, which convinced her of its integrity. 'Well, upon my word, you've magnificent hair!' she uttered, awe-struck.

'Not half so thick or so beautiful as yours,' said Laurence, innocently.

'Mine?' Linda burst out laughing. 'You baby! See!' and with nimble fingers she uncoiled the masses, took them off, and, throwing down her 'wealth of golden hair' on the table, stood before Laurence, looking rather prettier than before, though a little odd, with a light *frisure* of short wavy locks standing out like a nimbus all round her head.

Then, running to the glass, she began examining the nimbus with anxiety. 'It's taken the colour uncommonly well. It scarcely comes off now.'

'Your hair?'

'No; the dye. I wash it with something, you know, to give it that pretty red tint, then powder it with gold-dust. I'm too tired to attend to it to-night, though. By the way, what money have you got with you, child?'

Laurence explained. Her journey-money was in her trunk.

Linda shook her head reprovingly. 'When we get to Lucerne you shall give it me to take care of. I'll put it with mine in my bag. You should never let your valuables go out of your hands. Luggage robberies are so common.'

The diligence started at six. Laurence had earnestly prayed that the interesting exile might oversleep himself, or otherwise be kept out of their company. But no, he was waiting on the steps of the inn, and Linda greeted him with nods and smiles as he bowed and effusively declared himself her humble slave.

Poor Laurence! All through that tedious day must she sit, twist, yawn, sigh, or try to sleep, in silent endurance. Miss Linda and her noble friend—they were alone with him now—had resumed their talk and jests, and seemed

thoroughly engrossed with each other. The child was entirely overlooked.

The tantalising glimpses of scenery, giant rocks, vast fir-forests, cataracts, and magnificent ravines, that met her eyes now and then through the narrow windows, were worse than none, aggravating the sense of imprisonment. Towards afternoon she fell asleep; and as the day wore on even Linda's sprightliness waned and she dropped into a slumber unawares, resting her head on Laurence's shoulder.

The child, waking presently, thought—was she dreaming still?—it seemed to her as if their fellow-traveller had got hold of Linda's bag, which opened with a spring, and was thrusting his hand inside. It startled Laurence; she moved and rubbed her eyes, wide awake now. It was a dream. The stranger sat quietly opposite, with his fingers on the bag, true, but it was shut fast. So were his eyes. 'Why, he's asleep,' thought Laurence, 'and yet—' An uncomfortable impression remained.

The journey was now drawing to an end, and her companions made the most of the remaining hours in lively conversation. Linda was displaying her fine gold ring, and relating how her brother had given it her at parting. Playfully her new friend pulled it off and tried it on—it fitted his little finger. Then he placed the ring he wore, a gold hoop with a large diamond in it—on Linda's hand, and there was much banter over this interchange of rings. Somehow they omitted to change back again before the diligence halted at the last post-station on the lake of Lucerne. Here the passengers were shifted to the steamer, for this the final stage of the day's journey.

Linda's hero never left her side

for a moment, nor relaxed his attentions. Was she a stranger in Lucerne? Then he begged to recommend an hotel, one he always patronised himself, and that combined all advantages. Up to the last moment he continued to dance attendance on the girls. On landing he fetched a porter for their luggage, gave the name of the inn, and saying he would meet them there in a few hours—he had business in the town which might detain him awhile—he bade them farewell for the present, took up his valise, bowed, smiled, and vanished.

'He has gone off with your ring,' observed Laurence gravely.

'So he has! I have his, though,' said Linda, laughing to herself rather foolishly. 'Ah, well, we shall be sure to see him again at the hotel. Come on.'

When Linda, on reaching the inn, opened her bag, she cried aloud in dismay.

'Santa Maria! where is my purse?'

Missing. She searched in vain. It was gone, together with a pocket-book, containing all the money she had with her for the journey.

'I know what,' exclaimed Laurence, 'that man in the diligence, he robbed you.'

Linda turned to her in indignation.

'Nonsense, child; what will you say next?'

In vain Laurence related her suspicions, described what she had seen, or dreamt. Linda would not listen for a moment.

'Impossible! Fie for shame, you naughty suspicious little thing. Hold your tongue, please. You may thank me now that I have made a friend on the journey. I dare say he will lend us what we want to get on with. At any rate, he will advise us what to do.'

The evening wore on, but bringing no sign of the mysterious stranger, and even Linda began to look uneasy.

'He has been detained,' she persisted obstinately. 'He will turn up to-morrow.' But when the morrow came, on inquiry, she ascertained beyond question that no one answering to her description had visited the hotel.

Still she clung to her belief, and waited and waited. Then, as the conclusion forced itself upon her, her countenance darkened; she looked at the diamond ring, then at Laurence.

'Come,' she said briefly.

And she took off the child into the town, stopped at the first pawnbroker's shop, and presented the ring at the counter, asking,

'What may that stone be worth?'

The jeweller took it in his hand, but replied almost without examination,

'Madame is laughing at me. This is no stone—a glass imitation. The ring is a toy, worth a few francs or so.'

'And he told me it was a family jewel!' she exclaimed, half pathetically, turning to Laurence.

She hastened from the shop, nor spoke another word till they reached the inn. No sooner were they alone together in their room than she burst into a passionate fury, dashed down the ring on the floor and stamped on it, so scaring Laurence by her violence, that the child almost forgot her indignation at the theft.

The outburst subsided abruptly as it had risen, to give place to very unpleasant and sobering reflections.

'What in the wide world is to be done?' cried Linda distractedly. 'I had only that money with me. My brother was to send more, and pay remittances monthly to the

family I decide to board with. I can't write to Bruno; he is away from Rome, and he never lets one know where he goes. Then if he knew I had lost his last present, and how, he'd kill me if he could. O, he has a most frightful temper, dear Bruno! Poor fellow! he stinted himself for two years to start me well and give me that keepsake; and now that and his savings have all gone into the pockets of that swindler, that crocodile, that heartless vagabond!' And she burst into tears; but the shower subsided in a moment.

'You have some of your journey-money left,' she said, turning to Laurence. 'How much?'

'Three English pounds,' said the child, producing the remnant of her store; and Linda fell to calculating railway-fares on her fingers. She shook her head ominously.

'That's not enough. Now let me see.' She began to walk up and down considering ways and means. The predicament was serious. Her large box containing most of her effects and all her little valuables was following her to Bleiburg by goods-train. She could not hope to see it under a week. She had with her but a single trunk and a travelling-bag. To borrow money from strangers might have been difficult, and to try was disagreeable. She had no credentials, only an improbable story to put forward, which perhaps no one would believe, and which she was ashamed to tell.

'We must *pawn* something,' she said at last, with decision. 'It sounds dreadful; but there's no help for it. Show me what you've got in your trunk, child.'

Laurence's wardrobe accordingly underwent a quick scrutiny.

'We must see what we can get for your things,' Linda concluded. 'It would be a pity to part with

mine. Your dresses are quite plain, and so will be much easier to replace. Of course I will settle with you directly we are safe at Bleiburg. The matter is to get there somehow, and as soon as possible.'

Laurence looked on amazed whilst her companion made a selection, went out with a bundle, and in due time returned, having disposed of Laurence's outfit for a modicum sum.

'Not much,' she granted; 'but every little helps. We shall find it a great convenience to have got rid of some of our luggage; and cheaper too, as what is left we can take with us in the carriage.'

With Laurence's money and the proceeds of Laurence's wardrobe they left Lucerne and reached Bâle, to find they could get no further that evening.

'Well, we can't sleep on a doorstep,' said Linda convincingly; 'it would be the dearest plan in the end, as I might catch cold and lose my voice, which is all I have to depend on. We must go to the station hotel. How lucky that I didn't part with my box! They might have been uncivil to us if we had presented ourselves with next to no luggage.'

To the inn they betook themselves accordingly. But not their utmost frugality could prevent the bill the next morning from seriously reducing their funds.

'We shall have to part with something else,' said Linda, mournfully; for there remained nothing now but her own possessions.

'Wouldn't they lend you something on your watch and chain?' suggested Laurence timidly. 'But perhaps they're a present, and you wouldn't like—'

Linda laughed heartily. 'I shouldn't get fifty centimes, dear. They're not gold, only copper-plate,' and she looked wistfully

around. Then, struck by a bright thought: 'How about your violin? They will give you another at the school.'

'I can't sell that, and I won't,' burst out Laurence, with a vehemence that squashed the motion in the bud. Linda, sighing, returned to her own effects. She crammed what she thought fit into her travelling-bag, then sent for a cab and drove off with her portmanteau, humming an air, taking the whole matter upon herself, and taking it so lightly, that Laurence, to whom the emergency and these mysterious methods of raising funds seemed terrible indeed, felt sensibly consoled and inspirited as she awaited her return. Linda reappeared in an hour on foot and triumphant. Such straits were not new to her as they were to her companion. They would now, she remarked, travel more comfortably than ever, being relieved of all but hand luggage. She had disposed of her trunk and its contents, though it was awful to think how little she had got for them.

With the aid of that little, however, they hoped to succeed in reaching Bleiburg that night. Having in the course of their railway journey to wait about an hour at a large junction, Linda proposed a walk in the town to beguile the time. There might be sights to see.

The shop windows in the main street fascinated her so that she got no further. It was about noon, and hot and dusty besides.

'Those ices look delicious,' she remarked, as they passed a large confectioner's. 'Come, ice is the cheapest thing we can take, and I'm perishing with thirst.'

She insisted on entering and ordering refreshments. When it came to payment the local charges proved extravagant, and she was

shocked to find her purse emptied except for a few pence.

'But we must have dined,' said Linda, as they left the shop, 'and dinner is much more expensive than ices and cakes; so we have really made a saving, on the whole.'

But their tickets were only for the next large station town, whence a branch line went to Bleiburg. The junction was reached at five o'clock; but sixteen miles still lay between them and their goal.

'We must walk,' said Laurence philosophically.

'That's right,' said Linda with approval. 'What a sensible child you are! For my part I prefer walking. It will be quite a relief after the shaking of the train. How long does it take to walk sixteen miles?'

Both girls vaguely fancied that by putting their best foot foremost they might accomplish the task by nightfall.

The road was smooth and pleasant, lying between rows of cherry trees along the river side. Linda remarked cheerfully that in this way they would see something of the country, which was celebrated for its beauty. The river was bordered by hills covered with vineyards and low woods, deep valleys opened up at intervals, and the heights were crowned with picturesque ruins: here it was the keep of a robber castle, there the chapel of an old abbey, left alone, the gravestones of a world that has passed away. But Linda had forgotten that she was not equipped for the excursion. Her close-fitting boots in particular, with their high-pointed heels, were ill-adapted for a long country walk. Before she had gone a mile she fell lame.

She sank down on a bank, laughing, took her slippers out of

her bag and put them on, saying,

'I shall save my boots, at least, this way. I shouldn't like to arrive with them worn into holes. For I positively must present a good appearance to my friends, that are to be, at Bleiburg, or they'll take me for a Bohemian and an adventuress, I know.'

They resumed their march again sturdily; but the hours seemed to bring them but little farther on their way. What with fatigue and helpless perplexity, Laurence could have broken down and begun to cry, but Linda's unflagging gaiety was enough for two, and served to keep up their spirits.

It was growing dusk; they were passing through a village, and halted a few minutes to reconnoitre.

'How far from Bleiburg?' asked Linda anxiously of a passer-by.

'Ten miles,' was the rejoinder.

Linda turned to her companion with a shrug. 'We can't get there to-night, that's positive,' she said. 'I see a little inn over there that looks tolerably clean; but they would never trust us, and we haven't a sixpence.'

'If I were to play something?' suggested Laurence suddenly.

'Upon my word, a good idea. Why did I never think of it before?' said Linda, laughing. 'How delightful if we could earn our hotel expenses! You might try, at all events.'

Laurence took out her instrument and began. But Linda stopped her, saying she would sing the *Loreley* song, and Laurence might accompany her, if she could. She had a lovely fresh mezzo-soprano voice, exquisitely sweet and clear. A troupe of gaping urchins crowded round them; a field labourer going home stopped, stared, and passed by, shaking his

head; such vagrants were no fit objects for his charity.

Linda desisted very soon. 'I wonder what they call this place. The people are evidently barbarians with no feeling for art. Put up your violin, child. A freak is very well in its way, but we are not a hundred miles from Bleiburg, and now I think of it, *what* would the professors say if they saw us masquerading as street musicians?'

It had seemed better than begging, but had turned out less remunerative.

Night was closing fast. The houses were shutting up, the lights extinguished. The last saunterers in the streets eyed the two girls with surprise and suspicion. Linda took fright.

'They will think we are gipsies, or worse, thieves and vagabonds, and lock us up,' she said, shuddering; and she hurried Laurence away from the streets and the high road, taking at random a side path leading into the hills, overhanging a solitary valley. Here they were alone, under the summer moon, and halted, breathless, looking down on the river and the slate roofs of the little town beneath.

A ruin crowned the hill, a red

round tower lifted its head, the broken walls and arches at its base were half buried by the overgrowth of grass. The girls sought shelter here. There was no dew, it was a warm night; they explored the nooks and corners of the ruin, and chose the best resting place it offered.

'I have always wanted to know what sleeping in the open air was like,' said Linda. 'If it had not been for this adventure I should never have made the experience. Upon my word, this old sunken chapel makes a very good lodging, and the owls and bats won't make any charge.'

The moon rays peeped through the loop-holes of the red tower. The moon - goddess, surprised, smiled and watched over the sleep of the wanderers: Linda, a little rosebud, sunk in the rosebud sleep of youth and health (she had carefully appropriated the bag for a pillow, and the shawls for a counterpane), and Laurence accommodating herself with a bed of grass and twigs, with her head on her violin-case, unable to sleep, half from a strange delight in the fantastic situation, half from a throbbing eagerness of expectation concerning the fate she was going to meet on the morrow.

FORTUNES MADE IN BUSINESS.

XIV.

THE FOSTERS OF QUEENSBURY.

ON a bleak and rugged height, eleven hundred feet above the level of the sea, stands the thriving manufacturing village of Queensbury. It is a village on a mountain-top, exposed to all the winds that blow, and commanding vast views of the surrounding country, including in the prospect the busy smoke-hued towns of Halifax and Bradford, their forests of towering factory chimneys, and the far-stretching hills and dales which intervene. Seventy years ago Queensbury was a remote and not easily accessible hamlet of some two hundred inhabitants; to-day it is a great industrial colony, with a population of about eight thousand persons. Seventy years ago it was known to mail-coach travellers as a welcome halting-place, where, after a long and toilsome climb with panting horses, they were enabled to procure rest and warmth and refreshment before dropping down into the valley on the other side. The name of this lonely roadside hostelry, where the horses baited and the travellers rested and regaled, was the Queen's Head, and it was by no other name than Queen's Head that the village was known down to the year 1863, when it declined any longer to be satisfied with a public-house signboard for a name, and proclaimed itself to the world, formally, seriously, and irrevocably, as Queensbury, and by that name it has been known ever since. It was in the Queen Anne period that the Queen's Head inn was instituted; prior to that the

little cluster of one-storied tenements, which stood perched there on the hill-top, had been known by the primitive name of Causewayend. Up to that particular turning-point of the road, it is safe to presume, there had existed on the Bradford side of the hill some semblance of a civilised road, and a causeway for foot-passengers; but it had not been considered necessary to continue the causeway beyond these few cottages; hence the name Causewayend, or, according to the customary vernacular definition, 't' Caus'a' End.'

The hardy, vigorous, plain-spoken Yorkshiremen who settled in this lofty region did not trouble themselves to think out euphonious or high-sounding names for the odd nooks and corners of the hill-side, which gradually became peopled as the locality developed into a manufacturing district. Spades were spades to them, and they christened their dwelling-grounds, homesteads, and landmarks in conformity with their physical peculiarities or their special associations. For instance, there was Scarlet Heights, where local tradition said there had been a sanguinary fray between contending factions in the time of the Wars of the Roses. A field in the same vicinity was called Bloody Ing, and a block of houses subsequently built thereon was styled Bloody Row. Then there was Nave-lane (since corrupted into Knave-lane), which obtained its title from the fact that no

vehicle could plough through its quagmires and bogs without sinking to the *nave* of its wheels. Blackdike, Blackmires, Blackshaw, Swamp, and Harrowins are amongst the other distinctive appellations which attach to localities in and around Queensbury, and they sufficiently indicate the original nature of this half-mountain, half-moorland district. In some few instances, however, the natives have indulged in something more than a mere descriptive appellation, and have selected titles which bring into strange relationship the names of the countries and cities of far-off lands. Thus we find such places as Greenland and Van Diemen's Land in close contiguity to Queensbury; and at Thornton, a mile or two away, we may walk from Moscow to Egypt, from Egypt to Jerusalem, and thence to the World's End, in a very short space of time.

In no part of Yorkshire was there to be found, at the beginning of the present century, more originality and vigour of character than amongst these hardy northerners; and it was amidst such scenes and people that John Foster, the founder of the worsted industry of Queensbury, was born and reared. John Foster was the son of Mr. Jonas Foster, and was born in the township of Thornton, the place which gave birth to Charlotte Brontë. Mr. Jonas Foster was a farmer and colliery owner, and lived on his own farm at Moor Royd Gate. He was descended from an ancient line of yeomen whose names had long been prominent in the annals of Thornton, and his circumstances were such as to enable him to give his son what would be considered at that time a moderately good education. John Foster was born on the 20th of January 1798, and received his earliest educational

training at the Thornton Grammar School, an institution which had been founded and endowed in 1672 'for the maintenance of a school-master to teach Latin and English.' How much of Latin or of English was drilled into the future manufacturer prince at this school it is difficult to say; but, after a time, his father considered it well to take him away from the school, and give him the opportunity of exercising his mind in business pursuits. John Foster employed himself with great energy in the work of his father's farm and mines, and early and late was to be found plodding away persistently and methodically in the rural occupations to which he was directed. But his father was anxious that he should not give himself up entirely to business as yet, although he had always destined him, in his own mind, for a commercial career. So, after allowing John to follow his bent for a while on the farm, he sent him to Brookhouse School, near Ovenden, and there the young man may be said to have completed his education. It was while at this school that he made the acquaintance of Mr. Jonathan Akroyd of Halifax, who afterwards became the founder of another of the largest manufacturing concerns in the West Riding; and it is not improbable that the friendship that was then engendered between two congenial minds acted as an incentive to both to undertake those business enterprises which ultimately brought them fame and fortune. They were both Yorkshiremen of the truest type, wont to look upon life in that self-reliant manly spirit which recognises the necessity to fight and conquer, but scorns to stoop to low devices for the achievement of its ends. They appreciated to the full the dignity of labour; and it is pleasant to

think of these two kindred spirits, with their high aims and active brains, looking out together upon the future, and resolving, dreaming, and planning as to what they would create for themselves out of it. After leaving Brookhouse School, John Foster set himself to learn the art and mystery of the worsted manufacture; and so diligently and successfully did he apply himself in this direction, that by the time he came of age, in 1819, he was able to establish a worsted business of his own at Low Fold, near Queensbury. In the same year he took a further means of settling himself in life by marrying the daughter of Mr. Abram Briggs. In this estimable lady Mr. Foster found a helpmeet in the truest sense of the word, and from that time forward, both in his domestic and in his business relations, he seems to have been peculiarly fortunate.

The worsted manufacture was at this period just beginning to show signs of that vigorous development which, thanks to the energy, foresight, and directness of purpose of such pioneers as Mr. Foster, subsequently attended it. The country was fast recovering from the trade-crippling effects of the wars with Napoleon, and, what with the increasing power of mechanical invention and the growing confidence of capitalists, an era of industrial prosperity appeared to be at last an actual realisation. Mr. Foster was one of the first to take advantage of this improved state of things; and in hundreds of cottages on the remote hill-top in and around Queensbury there was to be heard from morn to night the sound of busy looms, engaged in making the worsted pieces which Mr. Foster found a ready market for in Bradford and Halifax. In course of time, Mr. Foster became

the largest employer of hand-loom labour in the district, and for certain special fabrics he acquired a considerable reputation. The goods chiefly manufactured by him were lastings and damasks. The former were, as their name implies, textiles of a very strong description, hardy, stout, and sturdy, like the people who were engaged in producing them.

The next landmark in Mr. Foster's career was the building of Prospect House at Queensbury, a substantial mansion which he erected in 1827, and resided in continuously for the greater part of his life. Prospect House not only added dignity to the Queensbury landscape, but served to indicate that the young manufacturer had reached a point of success which was in advance of anything that had been achieved in that locality before. To the people around it would then seem that Mr. Foster had attained the height of his prosperity; whereas, as it subsequently turned out, he was yet only on the very threshold of his commercial career. Already he had made what in those days would be considered a fortune, despite the remoteness of the locality wherein he had pitched his tent, and the frequent periods of depression which occurred in those days; but he was still young, and had a family of sons and daughters growing up around him, and the more success he won the more he desired. The ambition of a man of business, fortunately, has no limit, and Mr. Foster plodded on year after year with unwearying industry, adapting himself always to the demands and necessities of the time, and securing for himself a foothold in the commercial world from which he was not to be dislodged. By 1832 his operations had expanded to such a degree that he found him-

self compelled to look out for additional business quarters; so he became the tenant of Cannon Mill, a large new factory situated at Great Horton, a village midway between Queensbury and Bradford, and there he carried on for some time the main portion of his spinning business. Three years later Mr. Foster was prompted to build a mill of his own at Blackdike, the site of a farmstead at Queensbury, which had been in his wife's family since the year 1779. He was mainly his own architect in this project as in everything else; he had the factory built according to his own plans, and superintended the erection thereof down to the minutest detail, insisting always, in the spirit of the true economist, upon being supplied with the best materials and the best workmanship. Many people regarded the erection of this factory—now called the Old Mill, and forming but a very small portion of the Blackdike Works—as a wild and reckless investment of capital; but those who best understood Mr. Foster's character and appreciated his shrewdness and clear business instincts were far from predicting failure for the undertaking. In due time the mill was completed; and soon there were from 3000 to 4000 spindles at work there, turning out yarn at the rate of 1200 gross per week, a quantity which, at that day and in that locality, was looked upon as something prodigious. Not the most sanguine expectations of the founder of the Blackdike Works, however, could have forecast the magnitude to which these works were ultimately destined to grow. If the local pessimists of that day could have been privileged to have dipped into the future to the extent of some quarter of a century, they would have seen such a dis-

persion of cloud and shadow from their vision as would have almost made them believers in the truth of the old-world legends of magic and sorcery. They would have seen then (as many of them lived to see afterwards) that first Queensbury mill hemmed in on all sides by newer mills, each of them of far greater dimensions than the original factory, and of much superior architectural formation; they would have seen gigantic piles of warehouses, a long range of palatial offices, immense reservoirs, and extensive machine-shops, containing altogether no less than thirteen acres of flooring; in place of the 3000 to 4000 spindles they would have seen 50,000, capable of producing 12,000 gross of yarn per week; and in addition to the spinning they would have seen the processes of woolcombing and of weaving—indeed, all the operations connected with the production of worsted pieces—carried on upon a stupendous scale in this one concern.

The time it took to accomplish all this was very short. Messrs. Foster's establishment developed with all the rapidity of an American city, and their original competitors in trade were soon outdistanced. It is related of one of Mr. Foster's neighbours, a gentleman who aspired to keep abreast with Mr. Foster in the race for commercial honours, that when he saw the Blackdike factory rising in frowning obtrusion near his own property, he built a great wall to shut the building from view, and declined to allow Mr. Foster to become the purchaser of the land. This gentleman, however, belonged to the old school, while Mr. Foster was essentially a leader of the new school; it is not surprising, therefore, that the latter soon got ahead of the for-

mer, although, it is only fair to add, Mr. Foster's early rival himself amassed considerable wealth in his own humdrum quiet-going way, and was after a time glad to relinquish the wall, and to allow Mr. Foster to build up his mills and his fortune in peace.

A few years previous to the erection of Mr. Foster's first factory, a great transformation had taken place in the worsted manufacture by the introduction of power-looms. In 1822 Mr. James Warbrick had had a power-loom secretly made at Shipley; but when it came to be put into motion the news of its completion got abroad, and a mob of weavers surrounded the mill, and threatened the building with destruction unless the obnoxious loom was immediately removed. The manufacturer was thus compelled to take the loom down; and while it was being carted away under an escort of constables the excited weavers attacked the party, routed the escort, destroyed the loom, and dragged the roller and warp in triumph through the streets. Messrs. Horsfall of Bradford afterwards introduced some power-looms into their mill; and in May 1826 a large body of operatives made a desperate attempt to force their way into the building and get at the hated machinery; but a gallant force of constables and others, to the number of about forty persons, under the command of Colonel Plumbe Tempest, a local magistrate, defended the place from within, and successfully held their ground. The Colonel read the Riot Act to the mob and requested them to disperse, but was answered only by a shower of stones, which destroyed a great portion of the windows. After that one of the rioters fired a pistol into the mill, and the people inside retaliated by firing

some twenty or thirty shots amongst the crowd, killing two persons and wounding a large number. This unfortunate affair had the effect of crushing the opposition of the workpeople to the introduction of power-looms, and not long afterwards the new machines were brought into general use in the worsted factories of the neighbourhood.

One of the persons killed in this riot was a native of Queensbury; and it is easy to understand how the weavers of that village should view with apprehension the attempt to supersede by machinery the labour which was to them the sole means of existence. They were not capable of reasoning beyond this point; they could not see that greater facilities of production meant cheaper fabrics and a largely increased consumption. Mr. Foster at this time had no fewer than 700 weavers working for him by hand, and when the power-loom problem first presented itself to him one can well imagine that the welfare of these 700 dependents was quite as much in his thoughts as the desire to adopt the new machinery. Indeed, his subsequent action in regard to them amply proved that this was so, for he retained his hand-loom weavers at their old employment long after he had adopted the power-loom in his factory; and finally many of them were induced to transfer the scene of their labours from their own homes to the weaving-room of the mill, and to exchange their slow-paced hand-looms for the swift-going looms which were propelled by steam. Such weavers as were unwilling or unable to undergo the ordeal of transition were permitted to work their time out under the old system. Thus the sound of the hand-loom continued to be heard in Queens-

bury long after it had died away in other parts of the worsted district. The power-loom, however, was but a very imperfect machine when in 1826 it was introduced into Bradford; it could not then have been trusted to manipulate the class of goods manufactured by Mr. Foster. But the lord of Blackdike did not fail to keep his eye upon the experiments that were being made to improve the new loom, and when he saw that it could with safety and profit be adopted by him he was not slow in bringing it into operation in his own works.

Power-loomers were introduced into the Blackdike Works in 1836. The next ten years were perhaps the most eventful in the history, not only of Queensbury, but of the worsted trade generally. Simultaneously with the invention of new machines the invention of new fabrics went on, new fibres were discovered, and a variety of fresh and effective arrangements and combinations of old materials were hit upon. One of the foremost in tracking out and adopting these new ideas was Mr. Foster. The story of Sir Titus Salt's discovery at Liverpool of the 'three hundred and odd sacks of nondescript hair-wool,' known as alpaca, has often been told; but scarcely sufficient justice has been done to those who, like Mr. John Foster, were contemporaneously engaged with Sir Titus Salt in experimenting upon and perfecting the manufacture of alpaca. Nevertheless, it is not more than is due to those gentlemen to say that their efforts in that direction assisted very materially in furthering the development of this important branch of the worsted industry. Mr. Foster was experimenting with alpaca wool as early as the year 1837, and his efforts were such as to place him for a

considerable time in advance of almost all his rivals in the fabrication of this class of goods, and to the present time the Blackdike firm has preserved an enviable preëminence in the manufacture of alpaca. Hardly less important in its effect upon the worsted trade was the introduction of mohair as an element of manufacture, and at Blackdike as much as anywhere probably has this valuable Asiatic fibre been brought to its present prominence amongst the more lustrous and beautiful articles of feminine attire.

In 1842 Mr. Foster's eldest son, Mr. William Foster, came of age, and was taken into partnership, by which step a fresh and powerful impetus was given to the operations of the Blackdike establishment. Mr. William Foster had received his education at private schools in the first instance, and had then, from 1834 until he attained his majority and partnership, been steadily engaged, under the able direction of his father, in mastering the ins and outs of the worsted manufacture. He was possessed of the precise qualities necessary for the successful working of a large industrial undertaking like that upon which he and his father now found themselves embarked. The new partner brought to bear upon the business a rare amount of administrative ability, a full knowledge of the worsted manufacture in all its details, and that spirit of energy, enterprise, and devotedness which has always played so important a part in the composition of successful men of business. Mr. John Foster, with the recollection always about him of the old business methods from which he had broken away, might at times be disposed to think that his son was urging on the business at too great a pace; but

as time wore on, and as the ideas of the younger partner gained fruition and proved successful, the founder of the firm began to rely more and more upon the commercial sagacity of his son, and with well-balanced activity the business progressed and the works extended until the Blackdike Mills became one of the industrial wonders of the district.

It was a period of great commercial depression when Mr. William Foster assumed the position he was destined for so long a time to occupy at Blackdike. The distress amongst the working classes was very great, and what with the Chartist agitation, and the riotous combinations of unemployed operatives, the West Riding was kept for many months in a state of considerable terror and excitement. It was then that what became known as the plug-drawing riots took place. The old cry was raised against machinery, and the aim of the rioters was to destroy or otherwise cause the stoppage of the looms and spindles, which were the imagined source of the industrial stagnation. The disquiet which prevailed in the manufacturing districts was almost as intense as it had been during the time of the Luddite riots, and, but for the terror which the punishment of the chief offenders in those disturbances had left in the minds of the people, there is little doubt there would have been in 1842 a repetition of the excesses of 1812. Contingents of military were posted in all parts of the West Riding, and large numbers of special constables were sworn in; yet, notwithstanding all this effort to uphold the supreme authority of the law, the rioters wrought much mischief, and caused a temporary suspension of manufacturing operations in all the places they visited. Their

aim was, at all the mills they attacked, to force in the plugs of the boilers, by which means they insured the stoppage of the machinery for a while. Leeds and Bradford were in a state of much disorder; in both places there were frequent conflicts between the rioters and the military, though the soldiers in almost every instance refrained from firing upon the mob.

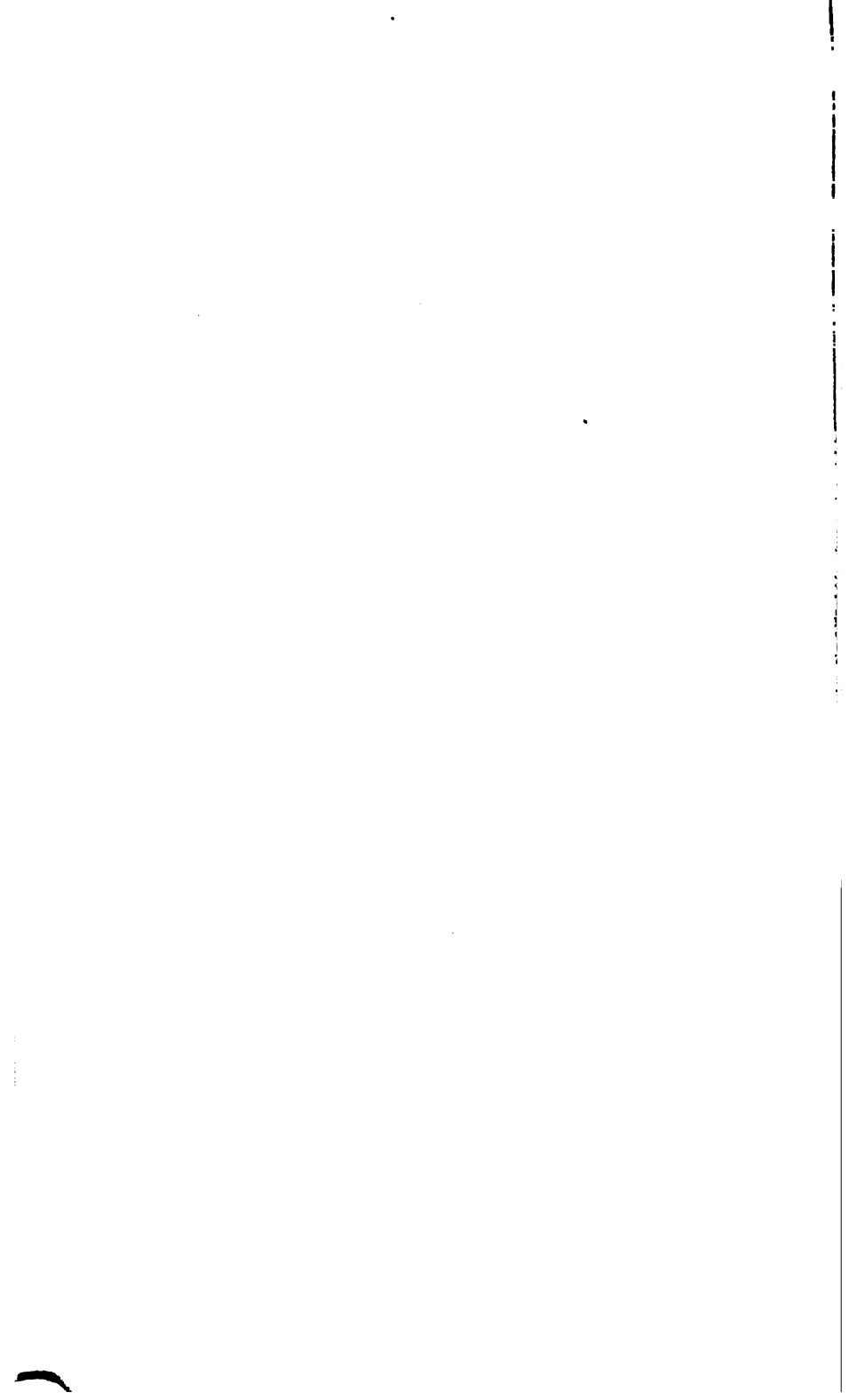
During all this time the works at Blackdike were kept going, and the people of Queensbury had much to be thankful for that they were, as it seemed, both out of the reach of the disturbers of the peace and out of reach of the worst features of the commercial distress. But they were not to be allowed to go entirely unmolested, as it turned out; for one morning there came a messenger to Blackdike in hot haste to inform the proprietors and their workpeople that a large army of rioters were marching on them from Halifax, intending to take Blackdike on their way to Bradford. This event must have formed a very striking incident in Mr. William Foster's first year's experience as a partner. He and his father at once set to work to organise a party of defence; and when the rioters came towards the summit of the hill, flourishing their primitive weapons, and rending the air with their wild shouts, they found themselves confronted by such an array of stalwart denizens of the hill-top that they passed forward without doing much damage. They plundered the village of a considerable quantity of provisions, however, and left a strong feeling of alarm behind them; but by the time they had well dropped down the other side of the hill, out of sight, the workers of Queensbury had resumed their wonted pursuits.

THE LATE MR. JOHN FOSTER.



MR. WILLIAM FOSTER.





For the next few years the worsted trade remained in a state of great depression ; panic followed panic, and failure succeeded failure, until the commercial affairs of the country seemed to have touched their lowest depth. But the wave of adversity appeared unable to reach to the remote heights of Queensbury ; it washed and foamed with disastrous effect miles below, at the base of the hill, in the smoke-canopied valleys where the tall chimneys of Bradford and Halifax reared their heads, and swept away many firms of ancient standing and a host of smaller men. Still, during all this time of trial and anxiety, John Foster & Son kept themselves high and dry above the torrent, and largely extended their sphere of operations. It was in 1842 that they built a large new weaving-shed capable of holding 500 looms, and not long afterwards they added what is known as the Shed-mill to their already extensive establishment. That the firm were able to make these additions during a period when the general trade of the country was in a condition of stagnation is a great testimony to their business abilities.

There is no doubt the geographical position of the works at Blackdike had much to do with the firm's success. At first sight, the inaccessibility of the concern would seem to be a serious impediment to its progress ; but to the strong-willed, hardy, and vigorous men whose fortunes were dependent upon the measure of success that attended the Blackdike enterprise, the presence of difficulties and obstacles, which by most people would have been deemed insurmountable, acted as incentives to exertion, and by incessant energy and application, and by the force of that hard-headedness which is the charac-

teristic of the best type of Yorkshire business men, they built up a gigantic success on lines which had theretofore been regarded as impossible of amplification. No railway or canal could get near them, either for the bringing in of their raw material or the outward despatch of their manufactured goods. True, there was not any railway even to Bradford at the date when the Blackdike Works were established ; but the country was busy with all manner of railway projects, and, although no one ever dreamed of planning a railroad to Queensbury, the Fosters were fully alive to the importance of promoting the railway system generally. So, although they had to be content, so far as they themselves were concerned, with a service of powerful wagons, strong horses, and sturdy drivers, for the conveying of their goods up and down the steep hill between Bradford and Queensbury, they saw the advantage of connecting themselves, even at a distance, with the improved means of carriage which was being established throughout the country ; and thus it was that their names became prominent, from 1842 onwards, in schemes for the formation and advancement of what have proved to be the most successful of our lines. Entering upon their railway undertakings at a most critical time, they nevertheless escaped being drawn into the joint-stock whirlpool, which swallowed up so many fortunes during the existence of the railway mania. John Foster & Son were enterprising, but they were not reckless. Mr. William Foster was the moving spirit of the firm always in respect of the railway concerns that they ventured upon ; and from 1842 down to the present time he has held a high position as director of some of the

leading Northern railway companies. He took a very active part in promoting the short railway from Leeds to Bradford, which line was opened some thirty years ago, and subsequently became absorbed in the Great Northern system. Both he and his brothers were also largely concerned in the organisation of the West Riding and Grimsby Railway, and assisted materially in the formation of the line between Halifax and Ovenden. Coming to more recent years, we find Mr. William Foster promoting the construction of a railway which has almost had the effect of connecting Queensbury itself with the railway system of the country. This railway is called the Bradford and Thornton Railway, and takes within its range a number of villages which stand at a considerable altitude; but it was too great a work, even in these days of astounding feats of engineering, to carry the line altogether to Queensbury: still it comes within less than a mile of this now famed colony, and must have proved of considerable advantage to the Fosters in the increased facilities of carriage that it must necessarily have given them. Of this railway company Mr. William Foster was the chairman. He is also a director of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company, and has, during the whole of his business career, identified himself closely with many other undertakings of this nature, in the working out of which he has, by his sound judgment and business tact, been of great assistance. As far as the legitimate and healthy employment of capital, and his own personal services and advice, are concerned, Mr. William Foster has always been ready to aid such schemes, and the good he has done in this direction will not go without recognition.

In the old days it was no uncommon thing for the senior partner of the firm to do a business journey from Queensbury to Leeds and back on foot, a distance of nearly thirty miles; and, though the roads were rugged and the hills were steep, he was well able to accomplish the task, being a man of almost herculean build, and capable of almost any amount of physical endurance. As time moved on, however, the strain upon Mr. John Foster was much lightened, his eldest son, and afterwards his other sons, taking upon themselves the main responsibilities of management. Mr. William Foster followed in the footsteps of his father in regard to planning and superintending the erection of new buildings, as well as in other matters, and it came to be a saying at Blackdike that there was not a single beam, shaft, machine, pipe, or drain, of which he did not know the whereabouts. Especially did Mr. William Foster turn his attention to sanitary matters, and to him in a great degree is due the admirable sanative arrangements which have made the Blackdike Works one of the most healthful industrial establishments in the country. Every building was projected on a liberal scale as to light and air; the old notions of cramming as much labour as possible into a given space were discarded; and the fresh mills and warehouses which were successively added to the Blackdike establishment in 1842, 1850, 1858, 1865, and other years, were model buildings, and as substantial as they were healthy and convenient.

It would be an injustice to the firm not to attempt to give some description of the works as they now stand. Let us, therefore, suppose a visitor arriving at Queensbury, and let us look with him at the busy scenes that would

there greet his vision. He will probably be a little tired on reaching the Queensbury summit, and will like to rest a while and take a general survey of the place. He will doubtless stop somewhere near the Gothic fountain which Messrs. Foster raised in 1863 to commemorate the virtues of the late Prince Consort. This fountain, which is forty feet high, stands at the junction of the Bradford and Halifax and the Brighouse and Denholme Gate turnpike-roads; and as the visitor halts here and looks around him he sees some hundreds of substantial stone-built cottages fronting the highways, or ranged in convenient well-paved streets which branch off at right angles therefrom, and seem well able to bear the brunt of wind and weather which they are constantly subjected to. On making inquiry of one of the stalwart villagers—everybody is stalwart and strong at Queensbury; it is no place for weaklings; *they* have to betake themselves to the valleys below—the visitor will be told that some four hundred of these cottages have either been built or are owned by the firm, who, as regards their cottages as well as their mills, have mostly been their own architects. If he allows himself still further to extend his survey he will see Prospect House, the solid stone mansion which Mr. John Foster erected in the early part of his career, and which has come to be regarded by his descendants with all the affection of an ancestral home. Short as the history of this house has been, the associations connected with it are of a character well calculated to inspire the men whose fortunes have been linked therewith with feelings akin to those cherished by the possessor of an ancient name and title for the halls of his pro-

genitors. A little distance beyond is to be seen a more modern and more handsome building, in the Tudor style, enclosed in a somewhat extensive park. This is Harrowins House, the Queensbury residence of Mr. William Foster, and is now some quarter of a century old. Then there is the church of Holy Trinity, which was built in 1842, and is largely supported by the Foster family; there is a 'Hall of Freedom,' a commodious public lecture-hall; there are the National Schools; and there are also many good shops and miscellaneous business premises scattered about on the most advantageous sites that the hill affords.

All these things, however, are but supplementary to the factories that have led to their creation, which from morn to night keep up a continuous buzzing and rumbling in the Blackdike hollow. The works do not burst upon the visitor's sight all at once and fill him with surprise, for as he approaches them from the road he finds a considerable portion of the establishment shut out from his view. When once he has penetrated the entrance-gates, however, he discovers that he is hemmed in on all sides by huge far-stretching factory walls, which, with their myriads of windows, look down upon him from the four sides of an immense yard or quadrangle. To the right stretches the long *façade* of the Victoria and Shed Mills, now merged into one building, one portion of which is six stories and the remainder five stories in height, having altogether a frontage of 473 feet. In a line parallel to the Victoria Mill can be seen some of the original factory buildings, looking venerable and time-honoured indeed beside the newer and more commodious erections which now rear their lofty walls around them;

and a little further down there is a long range of warehouse buildings. Then there come boiler-houses, engine-houses, grease-works, dye-works, and what not ; and on the side of the square nearest to the high-road there is a handsome suite of offices. Going further afield, and exploring the ground that lies on the other side of the Victoria and Shed Mills, the visitor sees stretching before him two gigantic sheds, one of which is given up to the processes connected with woolcombing, and covers an area of 5866 square yards ; while the other is devoted entirely to weaving, spreading over 5144 square yards and affording accommodation for 1000 looms. The extent and capacity of the works may perhaps be best illustrated by a few statistics. As has already been stated, the works comprise thirteen acres of flooring. Some 3000 workpeople are employed in the various departments, and they absorb little short of 100,000*l.* a year in wages. In creating the steam-power necessary to carry on this extensive establishment not less than 10,000 tons of coal are consumed every year, or about 200 tons per week. A large proportion of this coal, it may be stated, is obtained from the firm's own collieries. The engines required for the running of the machinery represent a total indicated horse-power of over 1600. The consumption at Blackdike in the way of raw material is something marvellous ; about 15,000 packs of alpaca, mohair, English and other wools are manipulated there during a twelvemonth, and, after being wrought up into beautiful fabrics, are dispersed over all the countries of the world, lending new charms to female loveliness wherever they are seen, whether it be to form a chastely flowing garment for an Eastern

beauty or to adorn the figure of the most fashionably - attired Parisian belle. To what an extent Messrs. Foster go in the direction of assisting the world to dress is evidenced by the fact that their production of materials averages more than one piece per minute, equal to 4500 miles of manufactured goods in a year. To follow the wools and the yarns from their entrance into the works to their exit is an instructive and interesting task for the visitor. He sees the wool piled up as it first comes in, having travelled in bales from the plains of South America, the valleys of Asia Minor, the snowy regions of Iceland, the swelling uplands of Africa, the wilds of Australia, or the more peaceful pastures of our own country ; he sees it afterwards 'sorted' into different qualities, according to fineness of fibre ; then sees it washed and made clean and lustrous by machines which consume 8000 lbs. of soap per week, the said soap being made by Messrs. Foster at their own soap-works ; he sees it subsequently carded and combed by ponderous machines ; and finally, he sees it combined with cotton and other warps and woven into mohair, alpaca, stuff, or fancy fabrics, and rendered pleasant to the eye and delicate to the touch. It is worth while mentioning, too, that the offices belonging to the establishment contain a telegraph-room, which, by the aid of ten miles' length of wire, is connected with the residences of the different members of the firm, with their warehouse in Bradford, and with the general telegraphic system of the country. In fact, all that science and enterprise, skill and energy, have been able to do in the way of promoting a commercial undertaking seems to have been done by Messrs. Foster.

They have built up a business of great magnitude, have been the means of establishing a thriving industrial village, and have used the immense wealth which has rewarded their endeavours with a generous regard for the welfare of their servants no less than a due observance of the obligations which wealth enjoins upon its possessors generally.

Having now traced in rough outline how the Blackdike manufacturing business came to be established, and how, as the years went on, it expanded until the present high state of development was reached, it may be as well to devote a little more space to the subject of the *personnel* of the firm.

Of Mr. John Foster very little remains to be added. He had no ambition apart from his business. For the rest, he lived a quiet homely life, and never aspired to the position of a public career, often as he must have been solicited, as his wealth and years increased, to allow himself to be brought into prominence. Taking broad views of the many social and political problems which arose during his day, he was tolerant in regard to any opinion that was sincerely and honestly advanced, and never identified himself with any kind of faction, or with any narrow party contentions. He had great clearness of perception, was a good reader of character, and always held in kindly remembrance those by whom he had been served. He was gentlemanly in appearance, and in his manner showed a happy combination of the brusque, outspoken, healthy-minded Yorkshireman and the thoughtful, unaffected, undemonstrative English gentleman of the more refined type. For something like half a century his tall form and cheery voice were fami-

liar to the frequenters of the Bradford market, and for a still longer period he was a well-known figure in and around Queensbury, both in the works which he established and in the village itself. At all times anxious to advance the well-being of his workpeople, still he did not spoil them either by unduly petting them or by affecting too much patronage. He taught them the value of self-reliance, while amply supplying them with the means of helping themselves; and this system of unburdensome guardianship has been continued by his sons, with a result that must be highly gratifying to employers and employed. Queensbury contains probably more well-to-do workmen than any other industrial community of the same size in the country. Here, again, the geographical position of the place has been an advantage. The Queensburyites have been away from the general current of those smaller pleasures and amusements which are the means of wasting so much of the time of the working population of our large towns; and, with such examples of thrift and steady plodding as were constantly before them, it is hardly surprising that they should have settled down to ways of wisdom and economy. Mr. Foster studied his workpeople's needs much more than his own in periods of depression, and was glad that the largeness of his means enabled him to afford to 'work to stock' for their benefit, while many others were compelled to yield to the pressure of the times. The efforts that were thus made were, it need scarcely be said, duly appreciated, and are gratefully remembered. Mr. Foster used to familiarise himself with his people to an extent that few manufacturers of the modern stamp would ever

think of doing. Not only did he acquaint himself with their domestic troubles and anxieties, their joys and comforts, but he would occasionally join them in their social gatherings, and was neither too proud to call in and have a friendly half-hour's chat with his poorer neighbours in their cottage homes, nor too self-absorbed to ask a workman after the health of his wife and children when he met him in the street. It was an enjoyable thing to spend a social evening with Mr. Foster at Prospect House; his kind and genial manner placed his guests at perfect ease, and the sincerity and earnestness of his conversation made him a most entertaining host. Nothing gave him greater gratification than to recount the more striking incidents of the commercial history of the first half of the century, a history in which he had played such a manly and important part. Although a Churchman, he was not unmindful of the good Christian work which was carried on by other denominations; so, while we find that he took a leading part in the building of the Queensbury church (Holy Trinity) and the national schools, we also find that by gifts of land and donations he contributed very materially to the support of the Baptist and other places of worship in the village.

In 1861 Mr. John Foster, then in the sixty-fourth year of his age, bought the Hornby Castle estate, near Lancaster, one of the ancient possessions of the Stanleys, and went to reside there. He continued his connection with the works at Queensbury, however, down to the year 1869, when he finally retired, leaving his sons William, Jonas, Abram, and John to the entire control of the business. At Hornby his position was that of

a large landed proprietor, the successor to a line of distinguished noblemen and county magnates; it was a linking together of 'new men and old acres'—the accession to an ancient hall and patrimony of one who had earned in the field of industry almost as high and honoured a name as was won in battle by that Stanley of Hornby who went forth from the castle with his faithful retainers to meet the enemy at Flodden Field. How well Mr. Foster fulfilled the duties appertaining to the ownership of such a large estate is sufficiently testified by the fact that, in January 1877, after he had held the estate over sixteen years, the tenants on the Hornby estate presented Mr. Foster with an address, in which they expressed their high esteem of him as a landlord, and as one who had been 'mainly instrumental in establishing new and lucrative industries' which had 'widened and strengthened our country's greatness.' The address went on to say, 'The estate of which you are the proprietor, and we the tenants, may, perhaps, on its historic roll of owners exhibit names of more lordly sound, but none with truer right to say, "'Tis mine, not by inheritance, but by honest toil.'" There is something so suggestive, indeed, in this coupling of the name and fortune of a prince of industry with the fame and distinction connected with this historic pile and its ancient owners—it arouses so many interesting associations and contrasts—that in a subsequent article we shall endeavour to compare the picture which Hornby presents to-day with the picture—or rather series of pictures—that were presented by it in the past.

Mr. John Foster never remained long away from his mountain home at Queensbury, however,

but frequently returned to the scenes of his industrial activity ; and in 1877 he relinquished the Hornby estate to his eldest son, Mr. William Foster, who has signalised his succession thereto by submitting the grand old house to a thorough overhauling and renovating, which, while it will not detract from its architectural outline or character, will have the effect of rendering the interior more in accordance with modern ideas as to comfort, convenience, and health. Mr. John Foster, surrounded by his dearest associations, and in the midst of his workpeople, lived until the month of March last, when he died at his old home, Prospect House, aged eighty-two. He was buried in the family vault in Queensbury church ; his funeral was the most impressive sight that had ever been witnessed in the village. Mr. Foster was a justice of the peace for the counties of Yorkshire and Lancashire ; but beyond such duties as occasionally fell to him in that capacity, he seldom took part in any work of a public character.

We have already described to a great extent the part which Mr. William Foster, the present lord of Hornby and senior partner in the Blackdike firm, took in advancing the business founded by his father. Mr. William Foster may be said to have been cradled in business. He has had little else than business associations all his life up to a comparatively recent period. Even at school—where he was under the able tuition of Mr. Hinchliffe, a worthy and well-known name in the West Riding—his companions were mostly youths destined, like himself, to take responsible positions in great commercial houses. While with Mr. Hinchliffe he formed the acquaintance of Mr. Edward

Akroyd, Mr. G. S. Beecroft, and Mr. H. W. Ripley, each of whom subsequently became the head of a large business concern and was elected M.P.—one for Halifax, one for Leeds, and one for Bradford. The friendships then engendered between these afterwards-to-be-famous business men could not fail to have a beneficial influence ; and when Mr. William Foster afterwards came to join his father in the management of the Blackdike Works he displayed an amount of business aptitude and ability which was very remarkable. In every alteration and improvement which thenceforward took place in the establishment Mr. William Foster had a leading voice, and while still a comparatively young man he took up a position of great influence and honour both in the Bradford market and at Queensbury. The work he did in the development of the railway system we have already indicated. In educational matters he has also been a zealous worker, and for twenty-five years was trustee and manager of the Queensbury National Schools, in which capacity he did the village great service. Like his father, he has had no desire to bring himself into prominence before the public ; still he has not been able to escape having conferred upon him some of those honours which are considered naturally to fall upon gentlemen holding his position. He was for a time a vice-president of the Bradford Chamber of Commerce ; he is a justice of the peace for the borough of Bradford, for the West Riding, and for the county of Lancaster, and is likewise a Deputy-Lieutenant of Yorkshire.

Mr. Jonas Foster, the second son (now Major Johnson Jonas Foster), was taken into partnership in 1850, and for many years

took a very prominent part in the direction of the Blackdike concern. Apart from his business life, he has shown great activity in promoting the advancement of Church affairs, and some years ago built a very handsome church at Lightcliffe at his own expense. He has also been one of the most vigorous supporters of the Volunteer movement in its various forms, and for a considerable period has been major of the 2d West York Yeomanry Cavalry, the fine body of men commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Henry Edwards, Bart. Major Foster has won the confidence and esteem of his corps by the intelligent manner in which he has devoted himself to military matters, no less than by his kindness of disposition and general solicitude for the welfare of the men under him. The residences of Major Foster are Cliffe Hill, near Halifax, and Moor Park, near Ludlow in Shropshire. He is a magistrate for the West Riding, and also for Shropshire.

Mr. Abram Briggs Foster, the third son, has been connected with the Blackdike firm since the year 1852, and has long been one of the leading spirits in its management. He was at one time captain of the 6th West York Militia, and is a magistrate for the county of Stafford and the West Riding of Yorkshire. Some years since he purchased the Canwell Hall estate in Staffordshire, and this is his principal residence. His other residence is Northowram Hall, Yorkshire. Of late years he has taken much interest in railway affairs, and is at the present time a director of the Great Northern Company.

Mr. John Foster junior, the fourth son, who resides at Priestley Green, near Halifax, and at Egton Lodge, near Whitby, became a partner in 1855. He seems to have inherited the business instincts of the family, and employs himself actively in the management of the Blackdike establishment.

Major Foster, Mr. A. B. Foster, and Mr. John Foster junior, it may likewise be mentioned, are the joint owners of an extensive and valuable property near Whitby, known as the Egton estate; and in the first week of December 1879 the Archbishop of York consecrated a new church at Egton, which the owners of the estate had built at a cost of 5000*l*. It was built on the site of an ancient edifice, dating from about the year 1100, and will for generations to come remain a monument to the munificence of its founders.

The achievements of the Fosters, indeed, have been of a really stupendous character; they have not only built up fortunes for themselves by their business tact and energy, their intelligence and foresight, but have created a means of comfortable livelihood for a large industrial community. Their aims have been high, and with manful confidence they have borne themselves gallantly onward, until, by persistent labour and application, they have won commercial honours of the worthiest description. They have contributed largely to the national prosperity by their business genius, and in all they have done have shown themselves true pioneers and benefactors.

OUR LONDON NOTE-BOOK.

MR. GLADSTONE, in his eloquent address to the ladies of Dalkeith last month, alluded to the political duties of women, and expressed his belief that woman's influence in politics might be an important and beneficial one. I wonder if any of his hearers thought of the immense influence exercised by the ladies of Scotland in favour of 'bonnie Prince Charlie,' and what a powerful effect it had in paving the way for the temporary success of Jacobitism in Scotland. I remember that Lord-Advocate Forbes complained bitterly of woman's influence on politics in his day. Speaking of 1745, he says, in one of his letters, 'All Jacobites, how prudent soever, became mad; and all bankrupts became heroes, and talked of nothing but hereditary right and victory; and what was more grievous to men of gallantry—and, if you will believe me, *much more mischievous to the country*—all the fine ladies, if you will except one or two, became passionately fond of the young Adventurer, and used all their arts and industry for him in the most intemperate manner.' It was wise, therefore, of Mr. Gladstone to conciliate and flatter the ladies of Scotland, for they may possibly prove very valuable allies when the political campaign commences. Should they 'use all their arts and industry' in his behalf, I hope Mr. Gladstone will be more gallant and grateful to them than Charles Edward was; for deeply indebted though that unfortunate Prince was to the heroism and devotion

of women, he yet had the heartlessness to write thus of them in his later years: 'As for men, I have studied them closely; and were I to live till fourscore, I could scarcely know them better than I do: but as for women, I have thought it useless, they being so much more wicked and impenetrable.' But perhaps at that time his own wife's *tendresse* for Alfieri had soured and embittered him.

I note, too, that Mr. Gladstone was very earnest in impressing upon his fair Scottish friends the value of their assistance as the advocates of peace. The great orator, however, confined himself only to vague generalities; he did not go so far as Mr. Ruskin, who, in his *Crown of Wild Olive*, says plainly that all war is woman's fault; that at any moment she might put an end to it with less trouble than she takes every day to go out to dinner; and that if every lady in the upper classes of civilised Europe would simply vow that while any cruel war proceeds she will wear *black*—a mute's black—with no jewel, no ornament, no excuse for or evasion into prettiness, no war would last a week. That is a bold and sweeping assertion; but as I am not aware that the experiment has ever been tried upon a large scale, it is possible that there may not, after all, be so much extravagance and exaggeration in the statement as in some of Mr. Ruskin's utterances.

I note that the Tribunal of

Brunswick has decided that the will of the late Duke of Brunswick, by which he bequeathed all his immense fortune to the city of Geneva, is null and void. I daresay that most people have forgotten the fact that the eccentric Duke originally made the Prince Imperial of France his sole legatee; but on the fall of the Empire revoked his will in favour of the Swiss municipality. Time was when the Duke was a figure in London society; and I daresay there are some readers of this magazine who still remember the tall thin figure with the saturnine face, and the wigs that defy description. He had a complete assortment of wigs, and his dressing-room was like a *perruquier's* shop. His wigs were all of the same colour, black, but of different sizes and shapes. Those who knew him well used to declare that they could tell what mood he was in by the wig he wore. When he was particularly irritable and out of temper, for example, he invariably donned a wig of closely-cropped hair, which made him look a sort of cross between a prize-fighter and a convict.

The Duke's diamonds were even more remarkable than his wigs; they were the finest, I suppose, in Europe. He was very chary of exhibiting them, and kept them jealously guarded under lock and key. His English valet once swallowed a set of the Duke's diamond shirt-studs, whether by accident or design was never satisfactorily explained; but at any rate the Duke recovered them by a process similar to that by which the cat in Mrs. Gaskell's *Cranford* was made to disgorge the swallowed lace. A powerful emetic was administered, and, without entering into further details, I may say that the Duke ever after-

wards wore those studs as buttons to his boots.

The Duke, by the way, had a great liking, or perhaps admiration would be the better word, for thriftless, reckless, rollicking, handsome Tom Duncombe—the prince of the 'Corinthians' of his day—and Tom would certainly have been the Duke's heir but for his untimely death. Tom Duncombe had his Boswell in the person of a gentleman named Smith, a toady of the first water; but a faithful friend, too, after his fashion, and to him the Duke of Brunswick bequeathed 40,000*l.*, thus linking himself to the end with that wild London life which he loved, and in which at one time he was the wickedest and most eccentric figure.

Mark Twain says in one of his lectures that he considers himself a much more moral personage than George Washington, and gives this as his reason: 'George Washington *could not lie*; now I *can lie*, but I won't.' Neither George Washington nor Mark Twain would have gained the respect or esteem of Napoleon I., if I am to believe Madame de Rémusat, whose interesting memoirs have at last been published. She writes: 'Napoleon thought nothing of sincerity, and never hesitated to say that he recognised a man's superiority by the degree of ability with which he could manage to lie. On these occasions he delighted to tell the story that, in his childhood, one of his uncles had foretold that he would govern the world because he had the habit of always lying. "Metternich," he said at the time, "is becoming a statesman; he lies well."'

It is not a pleasant picture that

Madame de Rémusat gives us of the great Napoleon. He was absolutely heartless. 'He feared,' she says, 'the ties of affection; he tried to isolate every one; he only sold his favours in such a way as to awaken inquietude, thinking that the true way to attach men to himself was to compromise them, and often even disgrace them in public opinion.' Bourrienne tells us the same story. 'Friendship is but a name,' Napoleon used often to say. 'I love no one; not even my brothers. Joseph, perhaps a little; but that is from habit, and because he is my elder. As to myself—it is all one to me; I know well that I have not one true friend.'

To ladies Napoleon was particularly ungallant, and Madame de Rémusat formed no exception to the rule. 'Heavens, how red your arms are!' he would say to one. 'What a hideous head-dress that is of yours!' 'What a dirty dress that is! Do you never change it! I have seen you in that at least twenty times.' 'They tell me you flatter yourself you have lovely flaxen hair. My good madame, you deceive yourself; I assure you it is the ugliest shade of red.' He could not endure *embon-point* in ladies, and detested *décolletées* dresses. Such a combination of the two as the fashion of to-day tolerates would have provoked from him the coarsest railery and sarcasm.

I will take my leave of Madame de Rémusat and her entertaining memoirs with a quotation which has significance at the present juncture, and may not improbably embody a prophecy. 'It is necessary,' said Napoleon once, speaking of Frenchmen generally, —'it is necessary to keep your vanity on the stretch; the severity

of a Republican Government would have bored you to death. What caused the Revolution? Your vanity. What will end it? Again, your vanity. Liberty is a pretext. Equality is your hobby, and now the people are content to have for their king a man taken from the ranks of the soldiers.'

Sir Garnet Wolseley has, I see, been unable to avoid the fate which, nowadays, overtakes all famous men—he has been enlisted *volens volens* in the service of the advertisers. His 'counterfeit presentment,' in connection, I believe, with shirts, figures on the hoardings cheek by jowl with Mrs. Allen's lady of the wonderful locks, the amiable gentleman who smokes the 'Richmond Gem,' the intelligent gorilla, and the rest of the gallery of distinguished public characters which adorn the walls of *al-fresco* London. This new feature in advertising reminds me of a story which I heard the other day from an officer who has recently visited the King of Dahomey. My informant tells me that the height of fashion at the Court of Dahomey is a costume consisting of the blue, gold, green, and red labels carefully peeled from the medicine and pickle bottles brought by Europeans into the King's dominions. The labels are gummed on to the naked body, and the effect is, at any rate, startling.

Now surely this novelty in costume will not be lost sight of by advertisers. Think of the improvement upon the idea which might be effected by suggesting gorgeous advertising posters instead of the labels! How well 'Horniman's Pure Tea' or 'The Largest Circulation in the World' would look upon the dusky person of an African prince. I see

here the germ of a vast revolution in fashion, which will one day affect the whole civilised world. For, depend upon it, the time will come when we shall have our clothes supplied to us gratis, on condition that we carry the name of a well-known firm in startling capitals upon some conspicuous part of our persons.

Not long since an ingenious gentleman in New York discovered a method of rectifying—but no, I must use his own words—‘of repairing the ravages which time inflicts upon the human head, and of making the waste places of the aged scalp to bloom and blossom with every variety of desirable hair.’ The method consisted in transplanting ‘from a convenient head a thick lock of hair, and planting it in an artificial soil compounded of various chemical substances.’ In this soil the hair rapidly takes root, and grows with the vigour of other vegetables when forced in a hot-bed. When it has reached the desired length, it is transferred to the scalp of the person whose baldness is to be remedied, which has been carefully prepared for its reception. The hair is bound downwards on the exposed surface; in a few days it takes root again, and that shining expanse, which every man under fifty so cordially abhors, is soon clothed with a tropical luxuriance of hair.

I cannot conscientiously say that my faith in this cure for baldness is as yet unqualified; but then I have not yet been brought in contact with any remarkable instance of its success, and I am open to conviction. The method of the New York hair-transplanter has, however, probably suggested to an equally ingenious Englishman in

London another philanthropic effort to make art supply the deficiencies of Nature. This gentleman has invented a nose-machine ‘which’—I quote his own advertisement—‘if applied to the nasal organ for one hour daily, so directs the soft cartilage that an ill-formed nose is quickly shaped to perfection.’ We English are not a nation remarkable for good noses, so that the philanthropic inventor should do a good business among those whose noses are a trouble to them. Ladies who have been afflicted by nature with the nasal organ ‘tip-tilted, like the petal of a flower,’ may convert it into a pure Grecian feature in a year. Only it would not be well to let any of their male admirers catch a glimpse of them while the process of conversion is going on. It would be a death-blow to a romantic passion to be suddenly confronted with the fair object of it in the act of educating her refractory cartilage. The only serious objection that I see to this scheme of nasal development is that Grecian noses will become so common that persons who, like myself, love variety will have to wait, almost as long and as vainly as Mr. Micawber, for ‘something to turn up.’

As there seems every prospect of a severe winter, and skating will in consequence be a fashionable pastime, the following ‘owre true tale’ may serve to point a useful moral. A few days since a young lady who is the belle of a certain suburb not a hundred miles from Charing Cross, and is renowned not only for her charming figure and exquisite taste in dress, but also for her grace and skill as a skater, was fascinating a host of admirers and maddening with jealousy a host of rivals by her feats upon the ice, when she sud-

denly stumbled and fell. A score of chivalrous gallants sped to the rescue, but before one of them could reach her she had regained her feet. She was wearing a Canadian skating costume, in which, as every one knows, a liberal display of stocking forms an important feature; hence its popularity among ladies with well-turned—ahem!—ankles. Now it unfortunately happened in this case that in endeavouring to save herself the lady ripped her stocking with the point of her skate. She was not, however, aware of the mishap, and glided away from her rescuers with her usual graceful rapidity. As she sped along in conscious triumph a strange sound reached her ears, ominously like suppressed laughter. She cast a quick glance back, and I leave you to imagine her feelings when she saw that her course was marked by a long trail of sawdust. The shapely limb to which the wounded stocking belonged was fast losing its symmetry, and the secret of its shapeliness stood revealed. Enough; I will draw a veil over her blushes. But I doubt whether she will skate much in public near London this winter. I need say no more; the tale points its own moral, I think; still I may add that sharp-pointed skates may be dangerous, and it is as well to be on the safe side.

'An old Scot' writes to me in reference to my note last month on the representation of *Rob Roy* before George IV. at Edinburgh in 1822, and expresses a doubt as to whether I am correct in saying that Mr. Murray took the part of Captain Thornton, seeing that his name was always identified with the character of Major Galbraith. My correspondent is, of course, perfectly correct in stating that Mr. Murray's Major Galbraith was

one of the most famous and successful of that admirable comedian's impersonations; but Mr. Murray, in the first representations of *Rob Roy*, assumed the rôle of Captain Thornton; and I have before me as I write the playbill for Tuesday, August 27, 1822, with the full cast of *Rob Roy* as played before George IV. Mr. Weekes was on that occasion the Major.

Here are two anecdotes of the Edinburgh Theatre which, I fancy, will be new to most readers. In the middle of the last century it was the fashion for the audience in a theatre to dictate to the orchestra what tunes should be played; and the following was the reason for the change of fashion, which left the selection of the music entirely in the hands of the management. On the anniversary of the battle of Culloden in 1749 there were a number of English officers in the theatre, and they called out to the band to strike up 'Culloden.' The audience hotly resented this gratuitous insult to Scotchmen, and after a storm of hisses ordered the band to play 'You're welcome, Charles Stuart.' The band, sympathising with the Jacobite spirit of the bulk of the 'house,' obeyed the latter order. The enraged officers leapt upon the stage with drawn swords, and attacked the unfortunate musicians, who fled in dismay. The audience then commenced to pelt the officers with apples, bottles, snuff-boxes, broken forms, and every species of missile they could lay their hands upon. Thereupon the gallant warriors stormed the galleries at the point of the sword. A fierce *mêlée* ensued, and victory was declaring for the military, when the Highland chairmen, Jacobites to a man, hearing the cause of the quarrel, attacked the

officers in the rear with their staves, and drove them in discomfiture from the theatre. The next day bills were posted over the place announcing that 'in future the band was not to play any tunes at the desire of the audience, but only select pieces appointed by the managers.' And that was how a venerable stage custom came to be abolished.

The second anecdote is somewhat similar. The upper gallery used to be allotted gratis to the servants of the gentlemen in the boxes. When the Rev. James Townley's farce *High Life below Stairs* was first produced in Edinburgh, the indignation of the gentlemen's servants was unbounded. They were furious at this clever and caustic satire of their own affectations; and after meeting in solemn conclave resolved, with an impudence which throws all the impertinence of nineteenth century flunkayism into the shade, that the piece should not be performed again. Accordingly, upon the second night of its being announced in the bills as a part of the entertainment, Mr. Love, one of the managers, came upon the stage and read a letter containing the most violent threats, both against the actors and the house, if the management should dare to put the piece upon the boards again. Notwithstanding this audacious attempt at terrorism, the curtain rose upon *High Life below Stairs*. The farce had no sooner begun than a solid phalanx of footmen made an attack upon the stage. In vain their masters roared at them to stand back and leave the stage. The 'liveried menials' flatly refused. The masters drew their swords and rushed at them. The footmen stoutly opposed their oaken cudgels to the steel blades; and it was not till there had been

a desperate struggle, and some serious wounds had been given and received, that the gentlemen proved victorious, and drove the servants from the field. Whether they were all discharged by their masters or not, I am unable to say; but, at any rate, they forfeited their right to free admission to the upper gallery, and it was never again restored to them. From that time to this they have had to content themselves with smoking and tipping in taverns, while their betters are enjoying the play.

I wonder, by the way, what the feelings of the gentlemen in plush are as regards the immortal description of the Bath footmen and their 'friendly swarry.' Probably they have long since voted the author of *Pickwick*, as Mr. Tuckle voted the crestfallen greengrocer who accidentally gaped, 'a vulgar beast.' But it is reassuring to feel that they have abandoned the forcible method of showing their dislikes which characterised their brethren at the close of the last century.

There has just been published a characteristic letter of Mr. Carlyle's, addressed to the friend of a young man ambitious of contributing to periodicals, from which an extract will not, I think, be out of place. 'There is no madder section of human business now weltering under the sun than that of periodical literature in England at this day. The meagrest bread-and-water wages at any honest, steady occupation, I should say, are preferable for a young man, especially for an ambitious excitable young man. I mistake much if your cousin were not wise to stick steadfastly by his law, and what benefits it will yield him, studying, of course, in all ways to

perfect and cultivate himself, but leaving all literary glory, &c., to lie in the distance, an obscure possibility of the future, which he might attain, perhaps, but also could do very well without attaining. He has his mother and loved ones within reach; he has, or by diligence can borrow and have, some books worth reading; his own free heart is within him, to shape into humble wisdom or mar into violent madness; God's great sky is over him, God's green peaceable earth around him. I really know not that he ought to be in haste to quit such arrangements. Nevertheless, if he persist in the purpose to write, which in my ignorance of the details of his situation I know not that he should absolutely avoid doing, let him by all means try it. If he turn out to have the fit talent, he will decidedly find an editor; if not, it is better in all ways that he do not find one.'

How often, I should like to know, has the same advice been given to young literary aspirants! And always with the same result: the young aspirant would not take the advice, and was probably nettled that one who had gained popularity and pelf by literature should thus throw cold water upon one anxious to do the same. This young man seems to have rushed into verse, despite the warnings of the Chelsea seer, and verse of no particular merit either. Some years ago, Mr. Anthony Trollope wrote a short story entitled the *Misfortunes of Frederic Pickering*, the hero of which bore a singular resemblance to this *protégé* of Mr. Carlyle's. Mr. Trollope's hero began his career with an elaborate criticism on Milton's *Samson Agonistes*, which of course no editor would accept. Mr. Carlyle's young man started, or pro-

posed to start, with criticism of Shakespeare: whether he did so after the following remarks, I cannot say; perhaps he thought better of it.

Says the author of *Sartor Resartus*: 'I should say that your cousin ought decidedly to try for some other subject to start with than criticism of Shakespeare. Doubtless he must know best what he has the call to write upon, if he have really an *inward* call. But the thing he will have the chance to write upon entertainingly will be something he specially himself has seen, not probably Shakespeare, I should say, which all the world these two centuries has been doing its best to see.' And yet will any youthful author or actor ever be persuaded that he alone has not the gift of seeing Shakespeare and understanding him?

Poor Will Shakespeare! He has had many vile indignities put upon him; but I think the vilest I have ever heard of was perpetrated by a well-known professor of phrenology, who in lecturing the other night before a London audience on 'the Phrenological Delineation of William Shakespeare' (whatever that may mean), concluded thus: 'From the formation of this head I feel to-night that I have an argument with which I can challenge all comers who may have doubts concerning the truth of phrenology. Compare this head with the head of an idiot; is there not an extreme difference? And surely we can perceive the same extreme difference in the mental manifestation of both.' Was there ever a feebler deduction or a more equivocal compliment?

In a recent London libel case, which, by the way, is not settled

yet, the gist of the alleged libel is contained in the word 'orgie.' The learned counsel for the prosecution said that he had looked into a dictionary for a definition of the word, and had found 'orgie' to mean 'a drunken revelry carried on by night.' I don't know what the learned gentleman's lexicographical authority may have been, but as a matter of fact there is no such word as 'orgie' in the English language, any more than there is such a word as 'wage,' the singular of a plural noun 'wages,' the latter being itself a noun singular. 'Orgies' is in our language a noun plural without singular, taken direct from the French form of the Greek *ὄργια*, also a plural noun without singular, and there is no idea of 'by night' contained in the word at all. A curious question thereupon arises whether it be possible to libel a man by using in reference to him a word which does not exist in the English language, or further whether a charge of libel can be sustained upon a definition of the word for which there is clearly no etymological warrant whatever. I commend this point to the attention of the counsel for the defence (the case is a theatrical one) as an ingenious argument in support of his view of the alleged libel. Journalists have a slovenly habit of putting lax interpretations upon words, and perhaps it is only right that they should suffer sometimes for their laxity; but if the dictionary is to be brought into court as a witness its evidence should surely be governed by the strictest rules of the science of grammar and language. Otherwise, if every man is to give his own definition of the meaning of words, which of us literary crafty

men, however innocent his intent, is safe from an accusation of libel?

On what principle, I wonder, do juries assess damages for injuries received in railway accidents? Here was a successful London physician crippled not long since in a collision; his health is irretrievably gone, his nerves are shattered beyond repair, his existence can for the future be little more than a living death prolonged indefinitely. He is only forty-seven years of age; his average income for the last four years has been 6400*l.* per annum, and the jury award him 16,000*l.* The newspapers speak of this sum as 'extraordinarily heavy damages.' I cannot see that. The unfortunate physician has been awarded less than three years' income. Is three years' purchase, so to speak, a fair valuation for the surrender of health, professional prospects, and all that makes life worth living for? Supposing, now, that Charles Dickens had been cruelly mangled in that terrible Staplehurst accident, from which he providentially escaped unhurt, how would a jury have assessed the damages which he would have claimed from the railway company? Would they have thought three years' purchase a just award? I suppose they would; perhaps even less than that. The question is one which deeply concerns all men who are dependent upon their professions for their bread, and though the reflections it invites are somewhat ghastly, I don't think it is out of place to raise them here, seeing how many of those on whom London society depends for its welfare and amusement are in that predicament.

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THE WATCHER AT THE GATE.

LONDON SOCIETY.

FEBRUARY 1880.

THE MYSTERY IN PALACE GARDENS.

BY MRS. J. H. RIDDELL.

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE MORNING TWILIGHT.

MANY years before Mr. Seaton left London, before he had even taken the house in Palace Gardens, very early upon a summer's morning a gentleman was walking towards London, along that great eastern thoroughfare, then called indifferently the Norwich, the Ilford, or the Romford-road, but now generally distinguished by the latter name.

Of the suburbs situated in Essex, the gentleman who was walking towards London had literally no knowledge whatever; indeed his knowledge of most of the metropolitan districts lying outside a certain very narrow radius could not but be considered limited in the extreme. His tastes had not led, neither had circumstances compelled him to wander far afield, and, though many years a resident in London, he was still so ignorant of its less frequented regions—well, as most persons are who live within the bills of mortality.

Had he been aware of the fact, he was passing through a county which, flat and uninteresting though it may be to the outward

eye, is yet full of strange associations and historical memories for the man who has intelligently walked through the storehouses of history; but so far in his life this well-dressed individual had devoted his attention more to the present than the past, and, consequently, he was rather less acquainted with the notable events that have occurred in that part of Essex than he was with the wide, flat, treeless road, along which he was hastening.

He had been to a party.

In those days 'people who were people' still resided in the wide rich country lying east and north-east of the City, so close to the great Babylon, and yet still so far off.

The time was gone by, it is true, when those who helped to make history, whose names will never be forgotten, had their pleasant homes and haunts in neighbourhoods now given over to the demon of smoke and his twin brother, the fiend Vile Odours; but a quarter of a century ago, though the roses themselves might be dead and gone, their scent hung round many a stately mansion and fair broad park, and merchants who stood high in the

City, and who were known in lands beyond the sea, lived in those great houses, of which too few now remain, holding themselves aloof from more newly-risen men in the City, and residing in dignified seclusion near the wide-spreading marshes, which brought no ague to them; or the 'Flats,' across which the wind howled on the dark winter nights, when it was very bad for ships tossing about the German Ocean; or under the shelter of the forest trees, which they cut and lopped as though Epping belonged to them, when they wanted timber or took a fancy for correcting Nature's over-luxuriance of growth.

Some of those immense mansions still remain to tell of the state once held in them; great houses, that one laments to see, pass away under the auctioneer's hammer and become devoted to uses their builders never dreamed they would be put to.

They are to be met with, or perhaps it would be more correct to say they were to be met with (for the things which were yesterday are often not to-day, in modern London) all round and about the forest—Snarebrook, Wanstead, Leytonstone, Leyton, Whip's Cross, and Walthamstow, also leaving the wood country and getting down towards the marshes, at Ilford, Barking, West and East Ham, Forest Gate, and Upton.

It was from Upton the gentleman who walked Londonward came—Upton, then a most lonely little corner of the world, where lived, in some very large houses, some very wealthy people; but now, since West Ham House and grounds have been converted into a people's park, a mere collection of dwellings, run up by contract, with a station hard by, workmen's trains at convenient hours, and

London, like the water and the gas, brought to its very door. Until lately there was no station nearer than Forest Gate, and but few trains stopped there for the benefit of the Uptonians. From Plaistow the Tilbury railway ran through without stop or thought of stop till the train reached Barking; but in those days the lack of railway accommodation was not felt so much as is the case at present. People who were making fortunes had not then forgotten how to walk; people who had made their fortunes liked to drive to their accustomed haunts, and many a man who now lives in one of the fashionable squares or terraces out due west holds in his heart pleasant memories of the morning of life which he spent due east when he was familiar with every glade in Epping Forest, and could have found his way blindfold to the 'preserved water' at Barking.

In Upton, then, not at the Cross but near it, resided a merchant, known to the gentleman who walked westward in the cold gray light of a summer's morning before the break of day, after the fashion in which so many business people in London are known to each other.

They met on 'Change; they exchanged greetings cordially; they had commercial transactions. Number one understood pretty well the amount number two was 'good for,' and number two comprehended that, concerning the financial position of number one, there 'could be no doubt.'

Much more than this, however, they did not know. The one, it is true, understood that the other was neither an adventurer nor a man risen from the gutter. He was well aware that he had a father living in Lancashire, whom his neighbours respected, and of

whom the local bankers gave a good report. It had, in the regular course of business, been necessary for the merchant who resided at Upton to learn this much of the younger man's antecedents, and during the course of their City acquaintance he had never seen anything calculated to throw discredit upon the statements made by those who had known him from a boy.

On the contrary, indeed. If he had been a hundred years of age instead of five-and-thirty, he could not have 'buckled' to his work with greater readiness, or treated business more as a pleasure than he did.

He was at the office as soon as his clerks in the morning; he often might be found there after they left at night. He did not often treat himself to a holiday, but when he went away even for a short time, Mr. Marker generally found he had taken train from Euston-square and gone down to see his parents.

There was not a breath of scandal against him. His language was discreet and his deportment grave, his word could be relied upon, his statements believed implicitly.

Speculative people considered him over-cautious; but persons whose opinions carried weight commended him as prudent.

'A rising man, sir,' remarked Alderman Chitterly to Mr. Marker, and Mr. Marker said, Yes; he agreed with the Alderman.

It was in virtue of this belief that Mr. Marker, after a business acquaintance of six years, or thereabouts, asked the 'rising man' out to Upton.

'We are going to have something in the way of a dance,' he remarked, with that homely simplicity of language in which City men often delight, to veil the glories to be unfolded before the

astonished eyes of an unsophisticated guest. 'My girls have a couple of friends stopping with them, and so "pa" must needs let them give a party. Quite a quiet affair, you know,' he went on, 'only our neighbours and a few young fellows my sons are acquainted with. Come early; nine o'clock. O! I can't take a refusal, I really can't. You don't dance? Well, then, we will let you look on. There will be a bit of supper at twelve, and though I do not want to boast, I can give you a glass of wine such as you don't often meet with.'

Thus Mr. Marker obtained his pleasant way; the rising man did not want to go to a party at Upton, or, for the matter of that, to a party anywhere; but there was no particular reason why he should refuse the invitation, and Mr. Marker was pressing, and the distance reasonable, and Upton readily accessible from Plaistow or Forest Gate, or even Stratford.

That is to say, accessible in the evening going from London; but it did not seem an accessible neighbourhood at two o'clock in the morning, with never a train, or omnibus, or fly, or cab, to take him back to his lodgings.

He was a good walker, however, and so set out undaunted to work his way back to civilisation on foot. He walked fast, for the top-coat he wore over his evening dress was of the thinnest summer cloth, and the fog from the marshes had crept up through the night on the breath of an easterly wind, and Mr. Marker's rooms, large though they were, got towards the 'witching hour' uncomfortably hot, and after the gas and the crowd of hurrying dancers the bare high road felt bleak and chilly, though the season was summer and the month July.

He had taken of Mr. Marker's

wine and found it good; he had been presented to Mrs. Marker, and beheld that she was fat, and did her utmost to be gracious; he had danced with the 'girls,' or rather walked through two or three quadrilles, and saw that they were fair, and observed that their friends entered into the same category; he had been privileged to gaze upon some triumphs of upholstery, and mix amongst people who were very 'good' people indeed; men great on the boards of companies, incipient lord mayors, future financiers, embryo members of Parliament; not a man present who was not rich or on the way to be rich; not a woman who had not her 'dot' in reality or expectation.

She had 'so much to her fortune,' 'she will bring her husband such a sum,' seemed written upon portly mammas and slim fragile daughters. It was the Stock Exchange and the Court of Aldermen 'at home.' Everything seemed to say 'money no object,' except to make. Here was a man who could sign his cheque for fifty thousand pounds and think no more of doing so than you might, reader, of asking a banker to pay your modest fiver; there, another who was intimate with Rothschild, and who partial friends considered could feel the pecuniary pulse of England as well as that potentate.

It was an assemblage of much richer people than the 'rising man' had expected to meet; and the appointments of Mr. Marker's house were far grander than he had expected to find them; and yet as he walked Londonward along the Romford-road, he was not thinking of pretty daughters, or papas who were worth a plum; he had forgotten alike the bouquet of Mr. Marker's wine and the scent of the flowers in Mr. Marker's con-

servatory; and though, with that curious duality of impression which we can so often remember to have ourselves experienced, he walked briskly on, keeping step to the rhythm of a gallop his mind insisted on humming over and over again, his thoughts were far away from London and the house he had just quitted, away by the seashore on the flat Lancashire coast; in his father's office; on the hillside, looking down at a modest cottage close beside a mountain torrent; and again out with rod and creel to the calm deeps and dark still waters a mile or so down the stream, where the brawling waterfall rested quiet for a while ere breaking loose once more and hurrying off helter-skelter to the sea.

As he proceeded on his way he had to pass some mean-looking dwellings set a little back from the road, with green palings dividing their gardens, and fencing them off from the public thoroughfare.

The gardens were not large; like the houses, they were but of modest dimensions, and yet successive occupants had contrived to fill them with a wealth of flower and shrub which might have shamed many a stately mansion.

At the gate of one of these gardens there stood a woman looking intently in the direction of London. The gate was flanked by a tree of privet, large and bushy, though kept carefully trimmed, and on the other by a Portuguese laurel, surrounded by a good undergrowth of laurestinus.

The 'rising man,' walking fast, did not perceive the woman, shrouded from sight by the leafy screen, till he was almost past her, and then he did not see her face, both because it was turned from

him, and also because the night shadows were not fully lifted by the hand of the coming day.

He had not got more than a couple of yards, however, beyond the gate beside which she stood when he stopped surprised.

'Did you speak to me?' he asked, looking round.

'Yes,' she answered. 'Are you going to Stratford?'

He turned, but did not retrace his steps.

'I am going to London,' he said.

'It is the same thing,' she remarked. 'As you pass through Stratford will you do something for me?'

'What is it?' he inquired doubtfully.

He was not an impulsive man, and his instincts certainly never led him to rush madly to the relief of beauty in distress.

'Only to leave a note at the doctor's,' she explained—if she noticed his hesitation she took no notice of it. 'Come in a minute while I get it,' and she opened the garden-gate as she spoke and waited for him.

He went towards her slowly; he had no intention of going in; he never felt less inclined to do anything in his life than to stand there parleying with her; he had resided long enough in London to have outlived the frank trust, the fearless confidence of the country; but he could not overlook the one word 'doctor,' and if his help were really needed he was not the man to refuse giving it, even though his acquiescence involved considerable inconvenience to himself.

So he took the half-dozen steps that intervened between them, walked close up to the gate beside which she stood, a white ghostly-looking figure, and in the dim light beheld, as in a dream, the

most beautiful woman his eyes had ever rested upon.

His eyes, remember. She might not have seemed so beautiful to you or to me, but to him she seemed the loveliest creature on earth.

He could not speak, so great was his surprise, so thoroughly did he doubt the evidence of his senses; but it was not necessary for him to say anything.

'Come in,' she repeated. 'I have been waiting, hoping some one would pass, though I scarcely expected any one would, in this forsaken place. I should have gone myself but I can't leave him.'

'Leave whom?' asked the gentleman.

'My husband,' she answered impatiently, motioning the stranger to enter. 'I have written a line; if you wait an instant I will get it. You won't go away while I am in the house, will you?'

'No,' he answered, feeling more and more like one talking and looking in a dream, 'I won't go away.'

She shut the garden-gate and flitted away up the short gravelled path, and across the threshold of her poor home, leaving him standing in the dark shadow of the Portuguese laurel.

CHAPTER V. •

MR. PALTHORPE.

HE had scarcely time to take in the external details of her home before she reappeared.

In one hand she held the note, with the other she was twisting up a coil of her long hair, which had either been unbound for the night or escaped from its confinement while she was attending upon the sick man.

'Ask him to come instantly—not to lose a moment,' she said. 'The bandages have slipped, and he is very bad indeed.'

If she knew that she was beautiful she had not a single act or trick which generally accompanies the possession of personal charms—not a turn of head or hand, not one involuntary grace to enhance her loveliness, no winning tone, no subtle inflexion of voice, no feminine gesture of deprecation, entreaty, gratitude. Many a lady in the land would have shown more courtesy towards the poorest beggar who turned the handle of her carriage-door than she evinced to this strange gentleman, whom she commanded without a word of apology or regret to do her bidding.

The instincts of a woman's nature are not blotted out by circumstances of anxiety, danger, and fear; and any one who had chanced to be well acquainted with the sex must, even making all allowances for her position, have been repelled by something in this woman's manner which not all her beauty could soften down or anxiety excuse. And yet that something arose more from a want in her character than from any other cause.

To this man whom she desired to do her a service she was not intentionally rude. If she had known how to address him differently, she would no doubt have backed her request with winning pleading words and sweet sad smiles; but Nature had not given her the graces of gentleness and softness, and art had failed as yet to make up for Nature's deficiencies.

So far in her life her rare beauty proved sufficient for her needs, and once again it secured her ready service.

'Where does this doctor live?'

inquired the gentleman, taking the note from her, and laying his hand on the latch of the garden-gate as he asked the question; 'and how am I to find him?'

'In the Grove,' she answered impatiently. 'Anybody will direct you—and do tell him to make haste.'

That was all; not a word of thanks, or of apology, or of excuse. Her attire was of the most sketchy description. Even in the still imperfect light any one could see she had merely donned some few under-garments and thrown a wrapper loosely round her figure; but she might have been dressed for a *fête*, judging from the perfect indifference she displayed about the matter.

'Poor creature!' thought the gentleman, as he walked more rapidly than before westward along the London-road. 'How miserably anxious she seems; how fortunate it is that I chanced to be passing at the moment!'

Fortunate! Well, well, our fortune, good or bad, is generally made for us by ourselves.

In the after years when he remembered that for what it was—the most unfortunate morning of his whole life—he knew that for the evil which came of the meeting he had no one to thank but himself; that when he took the wrong road and walked along it with an affectation of not being aware whither it would lead, he was scarcely cheating even his own understanding; that he could, if he would, have told all along where he was going, and hazarded more than a guess as to what would meet him at the end.

To be cast into a town where you have never been before and told to pick out haphazard a particular place and a special house cannot be considered an easy task; yet with less delay than might

have been expected the stranger in Stratford found the Grove and the doctor, whose name he read written upon the letter.

He rang, and almost immediately an upper window was opened, and a head thrust out.

'Who is it? What do you want?' asked the owner of that head.

As well as he was able, considering he did not know the name of the people and could only hazard a guess as to the designation of the road where they lived, the stranger answered the latter question.

'I have a note,' he added; 'and I was to beg of you to lose no time.'

'All right,' said the doctor, 'I'll be with you in a minute;' and he proved as good as his word.

In less time than it seemed possible for a man to dress himself, however hastily, he opened the door and bade the messenger enter.

'Come into the surgery,' he said, leading the way to a room at the back of the hall, where a gas-burner was alight, though turned down low. 'You have a note, give it to me please,' and he turned up the jet and ran his eye over the few lines traced upon the paper. 'It's bad,' he commented, 'very bad. I'll just take a few things with me and be off at once. Are you going back now?'

'I? No; I am bound for London. I know nothing about the people.'

'O,' said the doctor, looking out the various articles he required with wonderful speed and accuracy, 'then how does it happen you are their messenger?' and he turned his glance curiously upon his visitor as he spoke.

Never afterwards could the stranger understand or analyse the feeling which prevented him saying,

'I happened to be returning from a party at Mr. Marker's.'

The words were actually on his lips when something prevented their utterance. There was no reason why he should not have spoken them, no cause why he need have substituted for that frank statement the answer,

'I chanced to be passing, and Mrs.—'

'Palthorpe,' suggested the doctor as he hesitated.

'Palthorpe was standing at her gate looking out for a messenger.'

'I see; and so she impressed you into the service?'

'Of course I was glad to be able to be of any assistance.'

'Then I wish you would add another to one good work performed—that of returning with me. I may want assistance, and Mrs. Palthorpe is not the most useful person in the world in a sick-room.'

'If I can be of service command me.'

'Thank you. I see from your dress you are not bound on any errand of life and death, and this is really a sad case. You won't repent, I think, doing what you can for the poor fellow.'

Would he not? That was all the doctor knew about the matter.

'Is he dangerously ill?' asked the other, who could guess as little what the future held for him as the doctor.

'Dangerously? Well, no, for I hope he will pull through; but he is very seriously ill. With good nursing and good food and an easy mind he might mend rapidly, but as matters stand it is a troublesome charge. Now I am ready if you are. Shall we be off?'

The stranger, who had indeed only been waiting his companion's convenience, signified assent, and they went out of the house and

down the paved courtyard together.

It was now daylight; the houses in the best part of the Grove looked pretty and secluded, standing behind their screen of plantation, their windows peeping out from behind the trees. St. John's Church caught the beams of the rising sun, and seen just at that point and at that quiet time of the morning Stratford really looked a nice sort of town, a town where any one might like to reside.

Some opinion of this kind was hazarded by the gentleman, who had never beheld the place before.

'Ah!' said the doctor, and he said no more; but his tone implied many things which he failed to express in words.

They returned to the Romford-road by a nearer way than that selected by Mrs. Palthorpe's messenger, who had indeed unwittingly made a considerable détour before discovering the house of which he was in search.

They passed by the Green, with its snug old-fashioned houses and large fruitful gardens, and its outlook upon longer and stranger lines of funeral processions than can possibly be obtained in any other part of London. As the sun rose the mist cleared away, and revealed the long flat road and the turnip- and cabbage-fields to right and left.

'Picturesque, isn't it?' said the doctor disparagingly. 'You should see it on a foggy winter's day. Have you ever been down in the marshes beyond North Woolwich?'

'Never.'

'You ought to go, then, just for once. How people live there I can't imagine, and yet still they don't seem to have so many ailments after all.'

'What they have prove suffi-

cient, I suppose,' remarked his companion with a certain irony which seemed to fit in well enough with the doctor's humour.

'All about this part is healthy enough,' he said, remembering, perhaps, its doubtful policy to run down a neighbourhood which furnishes grist for the mill.

'It had need to have some compensating advantages,' was the reply, 'for it is not a beautiful district.'

'It lies close to a nice country, though. Within a couple of miles of this road I could take you some walks you would not believe were to be found so close to London. If you are fond of sylvan scenery you ought to run down to any one of the stations on the Loughton line, and spend an afternoon in the Forest. You would be delighted with that neighbourhood. At all times of the year those grand avenues of trees and the perfect solitude are to my thinking charming.'

'Really?'

'Really and truly; you will be surprised when you get there, and not more surprised than pleased.'

'I shall make a point of following your advice some day.'

He did not dream how early that some day was to be.

Though not particularly interesting, this conversation seemed to beguile the way till they reached the cottage where Mrs. Palthorpe was watching for the doctor.

She had taken advantage of the time, however, to make some alterations in and additions to her dress, and now stood in the morning sunshine, a very beautiful picture, notwithstanding that her gown was but a common print, and she wore no ornament save that given her by God, loveliness both of face and person.

A remarkable-looking woman, excessively handsome, endowed

with a weird beauty that had little attraction for the mass of people whom she met in the streets, or with whom she had been brought more directly into contact.

Hers was not mere prettiness, no triumph of roses and lilies, of golden hair, of blue innocent eyes ; quite the contrary. And yet her tresses did not outvie the raven's wings, or her eyes dwell in the memory by reason of their brilliancy, their blackness, or their dusky dreamy splendour. No ; if you had seen her you would have thought with the strange gentleman now coming up the road with the doctor,—you had never beheld any one in the least resembling her, whether in the flesh or on canvas, or in description. Neither when you had seen her could you have catalogued her with anything approaching precision, and said,

'She is lovely in feature, or form, or colour, or figure ; it is here, it is there, that charm of beauty lingers.'

Look at those masses of hair, deepest darkest brown, at the well-cut chin, the delicately-formed nose, the small white even teeth, the short upper lip, the pose of her head, the clear complexion, cream-like, and with only the faintest tinge of pink showing in it occasionally, the strange brown eyes, the straight black brows, the long curled lashes, the shell-like ears, the lithe supple figure ; and when you have looked and acknowledged that she is almost perfect in feature and in form, you will still find yourself unable to say what it is that impresses you with a greater sense of personal beauty than you ever felt before, that critically you must admire, though you feel there is something you do not approve.

Doctor Dilton could have hazarded an opinion as to the

repellent force in this singular-looking creature. He could understand that better than the attraction she seemed to possess for her husband ; at all events.

'I would not marry that woman,' he said to his wife when they once met her in the Broadway ; 'no, not if she were twice as handsome as she is, and had half a million of money.'

Mrs. Dilton was a washed-out little blonde, with faded blue eyes, a nose of no particular order, a peevish temper, and not a farthing of fortune ; but the doctor was right. His wife possessed something Mrs. Palthorpe lacked. Spite of her faults, she had a woman's heart beating loyally in her small body ; whilst as for Mrs. Palthorpe—

'Heaven forgive me, sometimes I do not think she is a woman at all,' he considered once as he walked meditatively homeward ; 'if I believed in some of those stories, now, that we read of in old books, I might imagine—but, pshaw ! where am I drifting ? my business is to cure her husband, and not to concern myself about her.'

When Doctor Dilton and his companion drew near the gate she opened it for them, just as she had opened it in the earlier morning, and after the merest word of greeting to the former she turned to the man who had done her errand, and said,

'I made sure you had played me false when I saw you in the distance ; I was waiting here hoping I should get some one else to go to the Grove for me.'

'The delay was with me, Mrs. Palthorpe,' broke in the doctor. 'To save time I brought such things with me as I feared might be required, and at my request this gentleman,' he laid a marked emphasis on the words, 'has

kindly, and I fear to his own inconvenience, returned in case I wanted any assistance.'

Mrs. Palthorpe looked for a moment at the stranger attentively, looked him over from head to foot, and then said with a slight flush rising to her cheeks,

'I am sure I am very much obliged. I hope, sir, you will excuse the liberty I took in stopping you, but I did not know what else to do. I had no one in the house I could send, and—'

'I quite understand all that,' interrupted the stranger gravely and courteously, the while a tremor which was almost a shiver passed over him. 'Pray don't make an apology; I am only too happy, I am sure, to believe I have been of any service.'

'Now I will go up-stairs,' said Doctor Dilton, moving towards the house. 'I can find my way, thank you, Mrs. Palthorpe.'

She would not suffer him to go alone, however, and they proceeded together to the first floor, leaving Mr. Marker's guest, who had certainly not anticipated this conclusion of the evening's experiences, to amuse himself as best he could by looking at the tiny garden laid out in the Dutch style, a round bed in the middle, quaint little corner beds to match, an oblong patch, top and bottom, all surrounded by luxuriant box edging, and divided by walks about six inches wide. It was a poor mean home, built chiefly of wood, and with that tumbledown look which houses out of elbows with fortune seem to have a greater facility in acquiring even than their owners, and yet Nature, who, like God, is no 'respector of persons,' seemed almost to have outdone herself in efforts to adorn and beautify the humble habitation.

Jasmine grew beside the porch, and spread itself over the window.

It was full of flower, and the sweet scent loaded the morning air—mingled with other perfumes, however; mignonette, pinks, carnations, musk, and a score of other such plants miscalled common, throve in their little enclosures like weeds, and sent forth their odours on the dew-laden air. In one corner there grew a bush of sweet-brier, in another a white rose-tree; over the whole front of the house climbed another rose, crimson, whilst as for greenery wisteria and honeysuckle and hops wereso twined and twisted together that where the one began and the other ended it would have puzzled any one to say.

It pleased the man who looked at all these things to imagine Mrs. Palthorpe flitting about the tiny garden, tying up the carnations, training the roses, bending the tendrils of the hops westward so that they might grow better, following the course of the sun, as the pretty fancy or fact teaches us ought to be done, gathering her lavender, making herself up bouquets, idly busy amongst the buds and blossoms, 'herself a fairer flower,' but if he had known a little more of Mrs. Palthorpe he would have guessed it must be some other hand which planted and tended and pruned and watered, some other whose love of the beautiful had been touched by those masses of greenery, by the quaintly set-out garden, by the great Portuguese laurel, by the songs of the birds, by the quiet of the house, which, though so mean and poor, was the best he could afford, and which, small and narrow as it seemed to the eyes of others, he clung to because it was 'home.'

Up-stairs this man lay ill, and about him the stranger who stood looking round the garden thought a good deal almost unconsciously.

He wondered to what manner of husband a creature endowed with such glorious beauty was tied. That she could not be a lady he had known before he saw her face, and it was most probable that she had bound herself to love, honour, and obey one who occupied even a lower position in the social scale.

If such personal gifts as she undoubtedly possessed had failed to produce those graces that seem naturally to associate themselves with youth and loveliness in the female sex, how was it to be expected that a man fighting his way in the world, waging that war against circumstances which it is the lot of the lowly-born to carry on so constantly,—a rough soldier keeping step with difficulty among the rank and file of London's great army,—should be more cultivated and refined?

'No doubt,' thought this stranger, standing amongst the flowers the man's own hand had planted, 'he is an uncultivated lout; but how anxious she was about him! Well, well, we know it is not always the brightest intellect, the highest attainments, that attract a woman's fancy and rivet her affections.'

'The doctor says, would you please go up-stairs to him;' thus Mrs. Palthorpe broke in upon his meditations.

He started, for her footsteps had fallen almost noiselessly upon the gravel, and he did not hear her approach. She had been so completely in his thoughts—she and her husband and her antecedents and her present position—that for a moment he felt confused at seeing her, and almost stammered as he answered:

'Certainly. Will you kindly show me the way, or can I find the room without troubling you?'

Evidently Mrs. Palthorpe

thought that he could, for she told him he would find the door open; and then, going into her little parlour, unfastened the shutter and threw wide the window, an expression of annoyance and discontent clouding her face as she leaned out of the casement and began idly to pluck the leaves off the roses clustering around it.

Meanwhile the stranger made his way up a narrow staircase and knocked softly at the open door Mrs. Palthorpe had mentioned.

'Come in,' said the doctor; and he entered.

It was a low room, but long, occupying the whole width of the house. There were two windows in it, both almost curtained by the creepers previously mentioned. That nearest the bed was closed, but through the other the sweet scent of flowers and the fresh breath of the early morning rose into the chamber of the sick man.

His bed, though placed between the door and one of the windows, was protected from draught by a screen roughly improvised by means of a clothes-horse, a railway-rug, and a blanket.

There was not much furniture in the room. It lacked even that look of common plenty which a labourer often manages to gather around him in the course of years—a French bedstead, painted imitation maple, a chest of drawers to match, a small wash-hand-stand, a dressing-table made out of a box covered with some cheap material, a few strips of carpet, dimity curtains to the windows, three strips of carpet round the bedstead, another by the wash-stand, and a fifth laid down before the toilet-table, a small looking-glass, two chairs—that was all; no fire-irons, no fender, no superfluous article of any kind, sort, or description, unless, indeed, it might be the invalid himself,

who, his head bound up, lay looking like death itself, breathing painfully.

Quite a young fellow too—ay, quite young. If the stranger's surmise were correct, and the man so shattered had ever been a coarse-looking lout, sickness must have effected a wonderful alteration in his appearance.

Unshorn, unkempt, uncared for as he looked, there was no more trace of roughness or commonness about him than could be found in his surroundings.

Poverty, bitter poverty, a glance sufficed to show, encompassed him; but in a man's house it is never the thing wanting, but rather the article too much, that turns the balance against him in the social scale. Bare floors and lack of furniture cannot of themselves condemn any one; but the furniture when chosen and the carpets when laid down often supply evidence sufficient to justify offended taste ordering the culprit to be hung by the neck. Now in this poor room, bare though it was of everything money could buy, the eye found no article to repel; rather, with the green leaves and starry flowers of the jasmine waving gently in the breeze, with the morning air filling the apartment with freshness and fragrance, there came a sense of beauty, a feeling of freedom, clouded only by a sentiment of profound pity for the human being stricken helpless in the midst of so lovely a world, unable to enjoy the summer sunshine and the glory of that golden time.

As regarded this man the stranger confessed himself at fault.

Well he knew the power of grievous illness to change and to destroy.

He had seen beauty distorted into deformity, a face ordinary

and weather-beaten paled and softened and attenuated till a painter might have desired to transfer it to canvas. He had looked in wonder at hands roughened by toil, discoloured by exposure, so wasted by sickness, so whitened by the course of the same malady that had blanched the cheeks, that they seemed as though they had never been soiled by labour or spoiled with hard work.

He was aware that sometimes, even as regards physical appearance, in that debateable land which is so close upon the threshold of another world, the peer may change places with the peasant, and the hind with his master; that illness, like suffering, brings into relief traits which have hitherto lain dormant, and throws the light reflected from a higher sphere upon pages we have hitherto been trying to read, in the darkness of a life where we see but as 'through a glass.'

Nevertheless, making allowance for all this, and remembering all the transformations his own eyes had beheld, the man who from the foot of the bed looked at the other and much younger man stretched upon it, felt perplexed.

Something in the quiet attitude of the figure, in the compressed mouth, in the hand stretched out over the coverlet, in the expanded nostrils, in the repression of all evidence of pain, told him the husband belonged to a loftier mental type and a higher rung on the social ladder than the wife whose beauty astonished him.

Watching his face the doctor saw that the enigma presented puzzled this stranger; but he only said in a low voice,

'I want you, please, to raise him a little, or rather to hold him after I have raised him.'

'Only show me what you wish

done, and I will strive to move him easily.'

The injured man, hearing an unfamiliar voice, opened his eyes wearily and looked at the new-comer.

'I do not know you,' he said languidly; 'but thank you. I wish I could thank you better.'

'You must not talk,' exclaimed the doctor.

'I try to do all you tell me,' answered the sick man wearily and slowly; 'but O, what a trouble I am to every one.'

'Trouble!' repeated the doctor cheerily. 'I think it is you who have all the trouble. Now don't be afraid, I am not going to hurt you.'

Quickly and skilfully he lifted him up a little, and then motioning the stranger to take his place, proceeded with his dressings as rapidly as possible.

Terrible were the injuries that poor body had received—ribs broken, chest damaged. Almost before a minute was elapsed the new-comer felt the sick man's head fall heavily against his breast, and the doctor, looking up at a sudden exclamation, saw his patient had fainted.

'He is so weak,' was his comment; 'hold him a minute longer. I have almost done. Lay him down now,' he added, almost directly afterwards, and the stranger complied with such deft gentleness, such tender carefulness, as elicited an encomium from the doctor.

Drawing his arm slowly away, he shifted the head from his breast to the pillow, and then stood looking at the sufferer.

In the days to come, in the days and weeks and months and years that were to follow, he would have given all he possessed, all he was ever likely to possess, to be able to lay down memory as he

then lay down that burden, to forget the placid look on that insensible face, and the expression which came into it after he was restored to consciousness, and tried to smile the gratitude he could not speak.

CHAPTER VI.

ALL FOR LOVE.

THEY lingered beside him some little time, the doctor giving such stimulants as his state required, the stranger moving softly about, regulating the light and arranging the poor draperies according to the directions whispered to him.

'I think he will go to sleep,' said Doctor Dilton, regarding his patient thoughtfully. 'I will look in again before midday, Mr. Palthorpe; and remember you are not to harass yourself about anything. The quieter you keep, the quicker you will get well.'

He was moving away, when he noticed a feeble movement of the hand lying outside the coverlet, and seeing what the sick man wanted, took the wasted fingers in his own, and stooped down to catch the words that trembled upon those pallid lips.

'I—do—not—know—how to thank you.'

'Thank me! Pooh; nonsense! I have been able to do nothing for you yet; but I hope to accomplish a great deal. Now go to sleep. Shut your eyes; you must not try to look at us.'

And making a sign to the stranger, he turned towards the door.

'Good-bye, Mr. Palthorpe; I trust you will soon be restored to health,' said the gentleman, who was about to resume his walk westward towards London, just

touching the sick man's hand as he followed Doctor Dilton.

Mr. Palthorpe opened his eyes and looked sadly at the speaker.

'I shall—never,' he was beginning, when the doctor interposed.

'You *must not* talk or be talked to. Come away,' he added almost roughly to the stranger, who had certainly not meant to do any harm by his somewhat conventional speech. 'I beg your pardon for my apparent rudeness,' he said, when they stood at the foot of the stairs; 'but he will try to speak, and he is not strong enough for such exertion.'

'I am sorry to have been so indiscreet,' said the stranger, not at all offended in reality, though for a second he had looked a little annoyed; 'I ought not to have spoken to him.'

'No one could have behaved more kindly,' declared the doctor, with frank courtesy, and then he passed out into the garden, now flooded with morning sunshine, in the full glory of which Mrs. Palthorpe stood idly and discontentedly putting with listless fingers some flowers together for a bouquet.

To her Doctor Dilton at once addressed himself with terrible candour and but scant courtesy.

'Your husband is much worse to-day.'

'Yes; I do not know how those bandages happened to slip.'

'You were asleep, I suppose?' interrogatively.

'Yes, I had just fallen asleep,' defiantly.

'He is very ill indeed; dangerously ill.'

'I told you in my note he seemed very bad.'

It was curious to see how they looked at each other, while they spoke with subdued voices in tones that never rose above a whisper.

Upon his face there rested an expression of irritation and disapproval, on hers one of unconcealed dislike.

The stranger, watching them both, felt the doctor was harsh and unfeeling; all his sympathies were enlisted in favour of the woman who had so grievous a burden laid upon her. In the sick-room his manner had been different; but there his professional instincts were aroused. Here he had to do not with a woman who was ill; on the contrary, Mrs. Palthorpe's health seemed, judging from appearances, to be superb, and he treated her, so argued the spectator, accordingly.

'He must have a nurse,' Doctor Dilton resumed, drawing on his gloves, thoughtfully, as he made this declaration.

'I do not know how she is going to be paid and fed, then,' said Mrs. Palthorpe, flinging the words at him with a fine disregard of reticence and civility.

'I will see to that,' answered the doctor, and in his manner he did not even attempt to conceal the antipathy he felt.

'Of course you must do as you think best,' she replied, more quietly than the unwilling listener expected.

'Yes, I must,' argued the doctor; 'it is too much for you. It would be too much for any person single-handed; and I want to pull him through if I can.'

'Do you not think he would have been far better in the hospital?' she asked, misled perhaps by the allusion to herself.

'Far better,' agreed the doctor, with suspicious readiness.

'So I say,' she remarked.

'Yes; but so he did not say, unfortunately;' and with this retort, the tone of which conveyed much more than the words, he

walked down the short walk and out of the gate without going through the slightest ceremony of leave-taking.

But the stranger was not similarly negligent.

As he bade her farewell, he said very earnestly he hoped her anxieties might soon be lessened.

'It is a terrible trial for you,' he added kindly, and with an appearance of genuine sympathy.

She looked at him suddenly as he spoke—lifted those wonderful eyes for a moment to his, and then in an instant turned her head aside, that he might not see the tears that had started to them all unbidden.

He could not, however, avoid observing her emotion, any more than he could fail to perceive that her lip quivered and her face flushed.

'I wish it were in my power to help you in any way,' he said tentatively.

'No one can help me,' she answered; 'but thank you all the same;' and with a hasty good-morning she turned from him and reëntered the house.

He stood looking after her for a second, and might have stood longer had the voice of the doctor not recalled him from dream-land.

'Are you going my way?' asked that gentleman, 'because if so, we may as well walk together.'

'I shall be glad to walk with you,' answered the other, hastily passing out from among the stocks and carnations on to the arid footpath bordering the highway to Romford.

'That is a sad case, doctor,' he remarked, looking back at the cottage, and letting his eyes rest on the windows of the room where the injured man lay.

'Indeed it is; sadder than any outsider could imagine.'

'You seem to take a great interest in Mr. Palthorpe.'

'Well, I do. Theoretically a doctor ought not to care more for one patient than another—ought to write his prescriptions for Hecate with as steady a hand as for Venus—but practically we are as other men, and have our likes and dislikes, our favourites and our aversions. From the time I was called in to see that poor fellow I took a fancy to him. I would give a good deal to keep him alive, though why I should trouble myself so much about it I am sure I do not know. After all, life is often but a doubtful blessing.'

'I should think life might hold a good deal worth having for a man so young as he is. A long future is before him.'

'Possibly, but a past is behind him, certainly.'

'You say that significantly.'

'I meant to say it significantly. He is one of the few men I ever met who risked a fortune for a woman's sake, lost a fortune for a woman's sake, and who is more loyally faithful to the woman now than when he first looked in her face.'

'Was it really so?'

'Really. This is how it came about; there is no secret in the matter: the wife's aunt told me how it happened when she came up after the accident.'

'Excuse my interrupting you for one moment; how did the accident occur?'

'Simply and prosaically enough. He was running to catch an omnibus in Stratford, and did not observe a van trotting round the corner of Angel-lane. Phoo! he was active and well and running across the road one second, and the next he was under the horses' feet with one of the wheels going over him. If the carman had not owned a wrist of iron and pulled

up instantly—I don't know how the fellow did it, I confess, for there is a slight descent at that point—he never could have been picked up alive. As it was they carried him into a chemist's shop close at hand and sent for me. When I saw him I thought there was only one thing to do, and that one thing was to take him to the London Hospital. I confess I did not think he could ever get there; but the chance seemed worth trying, and we were going to risk it, when he opened his eyes and looked at me.

'I saw there was a question and an entreaty in them, so I told him what we were about to do, and that he would receive every care and attention.

'He managed to get out the one word "Home." I thought he had not understood what I said, and so repeated that his best chance lay in being taken to the hospital.

'There came an expression into his eyes I shall never forget; the struggle of despair and agony, with the physical inability to contend against my decision, touched me to the heart. I have attended many men in accidents, but I never met with a case before where the mind seemed to remain so active in a body so crushed and injured.

'I stooped down over him.

"Home," he gasped; "wife."

"Would you rather we took you home?" I asked.

'There came a light into his face that not all the pain he was enduring could darken.

"Remember," I said, "they can do far more for you at the hospital than anywhere else."

"Ah, no,"—I guessed the words almost, for I could scarcely hear him speak.

'Well, how was I to know what sort of house and wife the man

had? A doctor is aware there are homes and homes, and wives and wives, and naturally I thought "he has drawn a prize out of the marriage bag, and if he is to die he may as well die amongst those he loves, and if he is to live he will be sure of good nursing." That was what ran through my mind, and I was just about to look if I could find any card or letter upon him that might give his address, when a little errand-boy, from a grocer's near by, said:

"Please, sir, I know who he is. He lives up the Romford-road, and his name is Palthorpe, that is what it is."

'Well, to cut a long story short, I went on to break the news. A gentleman I knew had been passing at the time, and his brougham stood outside, so we put the boy on the box beside the coachman and told him to stop at the house.

'When I saw the place we have just left my heart misgave me; but it was too late then to repair the mischief, so I went in and saw Mrs. Palthorpe, and told her as carefully as I could what had happened.'

'Poor soul, what a shock it must have been! How did she take it, doctor?'

The doctor looked with a queer expression at the man who asked this question, but he answered gravely enough:

'Very badly indeed. No; she did not faint or go into hysterics or anything of that sort,' he went on hurriedly, preventing any remark upon his statement, 'but she took it badly. I don't know that I ever knew a woman receive bad tidings in a worse manner. "She won't be of much use as a nurse," I thought; and as for the house—well, you have seen what that is.

'Even now I scarcely know how

he was got up-stairs. Fortunately he had fainted, and remained unconscious till sometime after, when he found himself in his own room and lying on his own bed.'

'The scene between husband and wife was dreadfully affecting, I suppose?'

Once more the doctor looked at his companion curiously.

'It affected me, at any rate,' he answered dryly. 'I never felt so sorry for any man before. It was evident he had felt a passionate attachment for her, indeed no one who was not passionately attached to a woman would have made the sacrifice for her he did.'

'Ay, you were going to tell me about that, by the bye.'

'So I was. Miss Aggles, that is Mrs. Palthorpe's aunt, gave me all particulars; but Mrs. Palthorpe herself had led me to believe there was a story.'

'What did she say?' asked the stranger eagerly.

'She never says much to me,' answered the doctor; 'and the way she came to say even what she did was simple enough. I did not think he could live, and so asked her if I should telegraph to his friends.'

'He has none,' she answered.

'That is impossible,' I said.

'What do you mean?'

'He has none really,' she persisted.

'But every one has friends,' I answered; 'why should he be an exception to all rules?'

'Because he has no money, and because he married me,' she declared.

'Of course I could not get over that dead wall, so I changed my tactics.'

'I suppose *you* have friends, though?' I said.

'I have relations, if that is what you mean.'

'Should you like me to telegraph to *them*?'

'Yes, I should,' she replied, and the strangest expression came into her face; 'you can send to Miss Aggles, Sunnysdown Farm, near Ravensmead, Hampshire.'

'It was not long before Miss Aggles came up. If crying could have done any good Mr. Palthorpe would now be walking about the neighbourhood. She seemed very sorry for his misfortune, and said her father would do what he could. She told me Mr. Palthorpe's uncle had disinherited him because he married her niece Miranda; that is the lady's Christian name. Young Palthorpe, it appears, married the girl secretly, and the affair was kept quiet for a while.

'But when the old Squire lay on his deathbed some good-natured friend excited his suspicions, and he sent for his nephew, and told him what he had heard.

'You know, Tom,'—Miss Aggles told me this—"you know, Tom," he said, "I always vowed I would cut you off with a shilling if you married old Bob Aggles's granddaughter."

'And the young man answered, Yes, he knew that.

'Well, I have had a will drawn up," the Squire went on, "leaving everything I have in the world to charities; but before signing it I thought I would give you another chance. I don't want any oath or swearing, or that kind of solemnity, but just tell me, Tom, that you won't marry the girl when I am gone, and things shall be between us as they were."

'Everybody thought the Squire was trying to leave him a loophole, for he loved his nephew, and that he wanted him, if he could not answer straightforwardly, to equivocate; but the young fellow

had not any white blood in him, and so he said simply,

"I can't tell you that, uncle; I am married already."

'They seem to have been a family given to very short sentences, if Miss Aggles's statement is to be depended on, for she declares the only remark the Squire made was,

"I am sorry for it, because I must now sign that will."

'He signed it; and his lawyer took it away, and young Palthorpe stayed with him till he died. They parted very good friends. The old man fretted, it was thought, about the place passing away out of the family, but he and his nephew never spoke on the subject again.'

'What a singular story!' observed the stranger.

'Yes, is it not? Come in and have a cup of coffee; I always keep the materials for coffee handy, so that I can make it for myself.'

'I thank you greatly, but I really want to get to London immediately. I have not had any sleep at all.'

'Well, you do not expect to get any now, I suppose,' said the doctor, to whom sleepless nights appeared the normal condition of human beings.

'I intend to try,' was the answer. 'You have interested me immensely in your patient, doctor. I think I shall have to be in this neighbourhood again in a few days. If I call upon you to ask how he is, will you think me intrusive?'

'I shall be delighted to see you,' said the doctor heartily. 'You will generally find me at home in the middle of the day. I do not make long rounds. Yes, I shall be very glad to see you. By the way, I don't know your name.'

The stranger put his hand in the breast-pocket of his dress-coat,

as if to feel for his card-case; but, with an odd sort of confusion, he drew it out again empty.

'Hay,' he said—'John Hay.'

'John Hay,' repeated Doctor Dilton. 'I shall remember that. Good-morning, Mr. Hay, if you won't think better of the coffee, and thank you very much indeed for the help you gave, both to me and my patient.'

'Good-morning,' answered the other; and the two parted.

As Mr. Hay got well into the Broadway, the sun was shining full upon St. John's Church, the first object in Stratford which meets the stranger's eye.

He paused and looked at the building and the graveyard surrounding it, with a feeling he failed to understand, a sensation he could not analyse.

CHAPTER VII.

A BUNCH OF GRAPES.

NOT a week elapsed before Mr. Hay found himself in Stratford once again. He started thither with the avowed intention of calling upon Mrs. Marker; but as on his way to the station he met Mr. Marker, who said he had an hour before seen his wife off to Reigate, it was difficult to suppose that lady had much share in influencing his proceedings.

What he did say, however, to himself mentally—because all men try unconsciously to cheat themselves—was, 'I need not return to the office now. As I am so far on my way, I will go on, and ask Doctor Dilton how his patient progresses. Really, I do not know when I felt so interested in any one.'

Which was quite true. He did

feel greatly interested in the man. For the sake of all concerned, it might have been well if his sympathy had proved colder, his pity less keen.

When he reached Stratford, he found it bathed in a glory of golden sunshine. The church, so well placed, which has about it a look of antiquity restored—though not more than fifty years have passed since smithies and other rough buildings of the same kind covered the site now occupied by St. John's, and its graveyard full of quiet tenants—seemed already to the stranger an old acquaintance when he turned out of Angel-lane and came suddenly into the Broadway. The wealth and fashion of that suburb lying so far out due east met him as he paced along the pavement. Well-dressed women, obsequious shopkeepers, carriages drawn by beautiful horses, the trees in the Grove looking more green and refreshing than they had done even in the morning light, the few large houses withdrawn a little from the main thoroughfare, a blue haze mingling with the golden sunbeams, a feeling of languor in the air, an indescribable drowsiness in the aspect of the town, a nameless something wanting in the *entourage* of the place and its inhabitants, a something which seemed to stamp the suburb as remote from London,—all these matters struck Mr. Hay, and impressed him with a sense of vagueness and unreality which did not seem so strange and dreamy subsequently as was the case at the time.

'No; Doctor Dilton went out at two o'clock to a case at Ilford,' the assistant stated, in answer to Mr. Hay's inquiry; 'and it was impossible to say when he would be home. Will you leave your address? He will call round whenever he returns.'

Mr. Hay said he had only come to inquire about one of the doctor's patients.

'Do you,' addressing the assistant, 'happen to know how Mr. Palthorpe is going on?'

'Very slowly,' was the answer—'very slowly indeed.'

'Any better?' questioned the stranger.

'Well, no,' the assistant imagined; he was not much better.

'Any worse?' persisted the other.

'No; Dr. Dilton had not seemed to think he was retrograding.'

'Then you can't tell me at all at what time he may be expected back?' asked Mr. Hay, meaning Dr. Dilton, and not Mr. Palthorpe.

'No, I really cannot.' Concerning that point, at least, the assistant was evidently certain. 'Will you leave any message?'

'You can tell him I called,' answered Mr. Hay; and walked out of the little door at the side of the large house into the bright sunshine.

'As I am here, I may as well go on and inquire how Mr. Palthorpe is for myself,' he thought; and so he walked on straight up the Romford-road, till he arrived at the cottage. There he paused for a moment; but after that instant's hesitation he opened the gate and entered the garden.

It was getting sadly out of order. Just at that time flowers and weeds were growing luxuriantly. Carnations, beaten down by heavy showers, lay helpless over the box-edging; the rose-trees thrust long shoots across the paths; leaves, pink and white and red and blue, shed by the sweet flowers in their dying hours, strewed the ground; some branches of the creepers had blown down, and there was no strong hand now to nail them up again securely. Already, after two nights' rain, the

place began to have a neglected look; already it seemed to miss the care the man now lying sick had lavished upon it. The quick deft hand, the ready pruning-knife, the constant hoe, the busy activity, the loving appreciation,—all these things the tiny garden began to lack, and ere long the insolent weeds and the insidious moss and the fat unctuous snails promised to have matters all their own way, and to make a wilderness of the fair *parterres*.

Mr. Hay looked around him almost with a feeling of pity for the pretty inanimate buds and blossoms that climbing convolvulus and gross docks and detestable cat's-tail were closing around and trying hard to kill. There was one delicate blush-rose of which the caterpillars had made sad havoc, and he noticed a slender lily jostled by the leaves of a stinging-nettle.

It looked like the beginning of the end—a rapid beginning promising a speedy ending. Shelley's description of that neglected garden in which grew a certain sensitive plant was no ideal picture. If a man who has tended his flowers and cared for them and weeded amongst them be sick, his nurselings droop too; if he dies, they soon follow him: the weeds spring up and choke them, as the steps of the wicked track the footprints of the innocent.

Some one, struck with the aspect of coming desolation, had commenced a vain attempt at resistance against the invading army. A small piece of the centre bed had been cleared untidily, and the uprooted intruders flung into a heap on one of the tiny paths, but the effect of this impotent endeavour was only to make the surrounding weeds look taller and more luxuriant.

'Poor creature,' thought Mr.

Hay, referring, of course, to the sick man's wife, 'she has other and more pressing matters to think about;' and he knocked gently—two very modest single raps—at the door, which stood about half-way open.

'Come in!' said a voice from the parlour.

The visitor, knowing he was not the person expected to come in, crossed the threshold, and then paused.

'Come in!' repeated the same voice. 'Don't stand there, whoever you are.'

He took a step or two forward, and then stopped again, hesitating.

At this juncture Mrs. Palthorpe, apparently losing patience, rose from her chair, crossed the room, and looked out into the little passage.

'O, I beg your pardon!' she said, colouring up at sight of her visitor, who felt as much confused as she. 'I never thought—that is, I had no idea— Please come in, sir;' and she led the way into the parlour, and placed a seat, with an appearance of much greater civility than she had evinced on the occasion of their first acquaintance.

He could but look at her. If, when they met before, she had seemed the most beautiful creature eyes ever rested upon, she seemed more lovely still, standing with the light streaming full upon her, and revealing fresh charms of form and feature and colour. She was less at her ease too, less indifferent than she had been during their former interview. She did not resume the chair she had left a minute before, and her hands toyed restlessly amongst the work on which she seemed to have been engaged.

'How is the invalid?' asked Mr. Hay, standing on the opposite side of the Pembroke table—a tall,

stately-looking, not handsome man.

'The doctor says no worse. I think he is not so well; he wanders a good deal.'

'Has he any appetite?'

'He has not; he is always fancying something we have not got, and if we get it the fancy changes.'

'What fine eggs!' remarked Mr. Hay, pointing to a small basket, in which lay nestling amongst moss some eggs laid by the then somewhat rare breed of Spanish hens.

'Yes; I walked up to Dorrody's farm this morning to make sure of having them fresh. The doctor said he ought to have one or two a day beaten up; but he won't touch them—shakes his head, and keeps asking for grapes.'

'Grapes?' repeated Mr. Hay interrogatively.

'Yes, and peaches and nectarines and suchlike. Thinks he is at his old home again—his uncle's house, where they had all those things. I wonder how he imagines we are to get them here.'

'Are they not to be had in this neighbourhood, then?'

'I daresay they are. Most things are to be had in most neighbourhoods by those as have money to pay for them; and there came a hard bitter look upon her handsome face, the look no woman's countenance wears save when she believes the world has dealt cruelly by her—kept its prizes for others and its drudging poverty for her.'

Mr. Hay moved towards the door.

'I daresay I can find some place where such things may be procured,' he said, and would have passed out; but she stopped him.

'I did not speak for that, sir,' she began hurriedly; 'he would not like to take aught from a

stranger, or indeed from a friend, for that matter—'

'But this is such a trifle,' he interposed; 'not worth offering or taking under different circumstances. I know a gentleman in the neighbourhood who has a very fine garden, and I have no doubt he will give me some fruit instantly. Pray do not distress yourself, Mrs. Palthorpe! I want to be of some slight assistance, and you must please let me try to be so. If he has a fancy for fruit, I am certain the doctor would say it ought to be provided for him.'

'That is likely enough,' answered Mrs. Palthorpe, her tone revealing that the old antagonism still existed between herself and her husband's medical attendant. 'He is always saying get this and get that, and let him have everything he wants, just as if we had hundreds in the bank, instead of being without a spare sixpence in the world.'

And into her eyes there came again that wrathful look Mr. Hay had already seen in them, which changed their dusky splendour into flashing fire.

Here was evidently no patient Griselda, no meek creature, who took the buffetings of poverty in good part, and learnt the lessons of adversity as a docile child cons its spelling-book. Quite the contrary, indeed. And yet the rebellious defiant expression gave such a new character to her beauty, such an exquisite colour to her cheek, deepened so much the intensity of those dark wonderful eyes, that the man must have been strangely constituted who on a first acquaintance had wished this fair woman more contented with her lot, more chary of giving utterance to her dissatisfaction.

Mr. Hay did not, at all events. He regarded the little outbreak as he would have viewed the petu-

lance of a lovely child. He felt sorry for Mrs. Palthorpe, and yet she amused him.

'She is so natural,' he thought, 'and so beautiful. This small matter,' he said, answering the spirit of her words rather than the words themselves, 'will cost you nothing, and me nothing either, save a little time and a pleasant walk.'

'You are very kind,' she returned; 'but he would not like it. If he knew, he would be wild angry; I am sure he would.'

The expression jarred more upon Mr. Hay's taste than her envious discontent had upon his judgment. In a moment it recalled the social gulf her husband had overleapt, and all he had lost for the sake of love and beauty.

The great pity which stirred his heart when he stood in that mean room beside the young fellow so suddenly stricken down welled up in it again. He would help him, he would help them both—the husband to health and the wealth the wife desired so evidently.

No longer should they wage this terrible battle with poverty; the man must be cared for, by some means money should be given to him. It was dreadful to think of his lying through those long summer days, craving with parched lips for luxuries most persons would have regarded as easily obtainable—luxuries this woman, for whose fair face he had fallen from affluence, seemed to consider as impossible to procure as though he had asked for the fabled apples of the Hesperides.

'When your husband is well enough to know anything about the matter,' said Mr. Hay, in answer to her hurried refusal, 'he will not, I am sure, feel vexed at your permitting me to get him a few grapes. My friend does not

live far from here. I shall be back again almost directly.' And without giving her time to raise any further objection he left the room and the house, passed through the gate overshadowed by the great Portuguese laurel, and, turning to the right, walked for some distance along the straight high-road leading to Romford.

When he got to St. Emmanuel's Church, however, he stopped suddenly. There four ways afforded ample choice to any pedestrian smitten with indecision—to the south lay Upton Cross, to the north Forest Gate, to the east Ilford, to the west Stratford, and beyond Stratford, London. Where was he going? where had he intended going when he quitted Mrs. Palthorpe?

Not to his friend's house assuredly; he knew that fact certainly now. Never for a moment had he intended asking Mr. Marker or Mr. Marker's gardener for fruit of any kind; on the other hand, he was vaguely aware some idea of finding a nursery-ground must have passed through his mind.

'There ought to be plenty of such places about here!' he considered. But then he looked at the aspect of the country round about, and felt doubtful.

Cabbages in plenty, fields of them, acres of them; potatoes by the ton; mangel-wurzel enough to have fed all the cows in London; farmhouses, gentlemen's houses, public-houses; but no sign of any habitation where a grower or seller of grapes could by possibility be supposed to dwell.

When once Mr. Hay took a matter in hand, he was a man not easily baffled; so he bent his steps to an adjacent tavern, and asked the landlord, who chanced to be standing in the doorway, if he could direct him to any one

in the neighbourhood who sold fruit.

'Ah, you won't get any nearer nor Stratford,' answered mine host. 'On Sundays there is a man who has a stall up near the Eagle, close to the Flats; but he is never there through the week.'

Very patiently Mr. Hay explained he did not desire such specimens of horticulture as are alone generally obtainable from the proprietor of a stall.

'Grapes,' he finished persuasively, 'are what I most require—grapes for a sick person. Now tell me where I should probably be able to buy them.'

The landlord paused; he was anxious to afford information, but he could scarcely impart a knowledge he did not himself possess.

'If you wanted apples, now,' he observed at length, 'a few bushels of them, or damsons for preserving. Come now, sir, what do you say to damsons?'

Mr. Hay shook his head, and said damsons would not do at all.

'That is a pity,' was the comment; 'because I could direct you to a rare place for them, out Chadwell way. You know Chadwell, don't you?'

Mr. Hay was obliged to confess he did not.

'Well, but you could easily find it. You could take the train to Ilford and walk across; that is the best way. Anybody will tell you where old Mr. Bastow lives. Bless you, he is as well known as the sexton! Tell him I sent you; and if you don't want to buy anything, he'll let you walk round his orchard, ay, and fill your pockets too, if you like, and not charge a halfpenny.'

'I am sure you are very kind,' said Mr. Hay, much perplexed by this unexpected friendliness; 'but at the present moment I want grapes, and not apples. And if

you could tell me of any one who sells them in the neighbourhood, I should really feel greatly obliged.'

'Grapes!' repeated the man, as though he had been asked for diamonds, and was considering whether about that part of Essex he could think of any likely mine; 'grapes! Missus,' and he turned towards his better half, who was in the bar, 'do you know anybody as sells grapes hereabouts?'

'No, I don't,' answered the lady curtly. 'All the folks about here likely to buy grapes has them of their own, and so of course nobody sells them. The gentleman won't get them nearer than London; at least, I think he'll save time by going there for them.'

The landlord listened to this remark with an air of considerable interest. When his wife had quite concluded he faced round upon Mr. Hay, closed one eye completely, pointed one finger backward over his shoulder solemnly, and said, 'You hear her! She's right!' and then smiled benignly.

Mr. Hay felt the advice to be so good, that he immediately resolved to put it in practice; and having thanked both husband and wife, and received some further counsel as to his route, started off briskly towards Forest Gate. Arrived there, he saw the train steaming quietly out of the station, and had to make the best of his way to Stratford, where the porter informed him he would be sure to catch either a 'main' or a 'branch.'

As he walked thither he passed a fruiterer's shop, and stopped for a moment to ask if the owner could supply him with what he wanted.

'I have not any this afternoon,' said that individual, 'but to-morrow I might have some; or if you could wait till the day after, I

shall be going to Covent Garden, and—'

'Thank you ; but I must have them to-day,' interrupted Mr. Hay, thinking Stratford seemed very far from London indeed.

Arrived at the station, then dirtier and smokier and more unutterably miserable than the mind of any traveller on that line can now conceive, he found it would be twenty minutes before an up-train was due; and accordingly he addressed himself to one of the inspectors, in the faint hope that he might know of some local Garden of Eden, filled with all manner of rare and delicate fruit.

'Grapes!' repeated that functionary, exactly as the publican had done. 'Grapes! You might get them at Frazer's, Lea Bridge way or Tottenham. I think they would be sure to grow such things at Tottenham.'

Mr. Hay turned away in despair.

'What a benighted place!' he thought.

Two hours later he was again walking up the Romford-road, which had already grown strangely familiar to him, when he met Doctor Dilton.

'Ah!' exclaimed that gentleman, stopping him, for Mr. Hay scarcely recognised his medical acquaintance in a more rigid toilette than that in which he had appeared in answer to his hasty summons, on the morning when he first beheld him. 'I have just been hearing about you. Mrs. Palthorpe said you had gone to get some grapes. Found your friend out, I suppose.'

Looking a little disconcerted, Mr. Hay confessed he had never gone near his friend's place.

The doctor laughed.

'Why, that is just my case,' he remarked. 'I don't know a rich man about here I would ask

for a grape, let alone for a whole bunch; and yet I daresay they would give me the best they possessed willingly enough.'

'I am sure my friend would to me,' retorted Mr. Hay, a little nettled. 'It was not any idea of that sort prevented my going to his house.'

'O, indeed!' said the doctor, as an encouragement for the other to proceed; but Mr. Hay did not take the hint.

'I thought I would rather buy them,' he explained awkwardly.

'It was very good of you,' observed Doctor Dilton, sharp enough to see there was a hitch somewhere. 'You have been to London, I see.'

'How do you see, if I may inquire?' asked Mr. Hay.

'Easily enough; we don't do things in such style down East;' and he pointed to the carefully tied-up baskets with which Mr. Hay was laden. 'I am so sorry you should have had all this trouble. It is unfortunate I did not chance to be in the way, for there is a gardener down Vicarage-lane who sells very good hothouse fruit indeed at a moderate price.'

'Where is Vicarage-lane?' asked Mr. Hay; not because he wanted in the least to know, but simply because he felt he must say something.

'It leads to West Ham,' answered the doctor. 'But don't let me keep you standing here; I will turn back with you.'

'How is your patient?' inquired Mr. Hay, as they strolled along side by side.

'He does not gain ground,' was the answer: 'he is not worse—not really worse, I mean—but that is all I can say. He has a good nurse too, now; he ought to get on better than he does.'

'Is he fretting about anything?'

'I do not think so; he is too

ill to fret, I fancy ; but it is hard to say. I often find that, if any cause of trouble exists, a sort of unconscious fretting goes on quite beyond the power of will or reason. For instance, if a man be harassed the harass continues even during sleep ; and it may be the same, for aught I can tell, in severe sickness.'

'It seems a hard case that a man should long for a few grapes, and not be able to get them immediately,' said Mr. Hay, who had been pursuing his own line of thought whilst the doctor was speaking.

'It does,' agreed that gentleman dryly. He was a little put out by the small amount of attention which had been paid to his remarks, and he was thinking also of some new ribbons and soft tulle lying on the table at the cottage when he went there, the while his patient was complaining no one would go out and gather some of the apricots from the south wall, or fetch him a bunch of the sweet-water grapes that grew in the further vineyard.

'Making a bonnet, Mrs. Palthorpe?' he had asked, as he watched her busy fingers tacking the tulle on a coquettish little shape.

'Yes,' she answered ungraciously.

'Is it not a pity to take so much trouble—yet?'

He knew it was an abominable question to put—bitter, cruel, unprofessional ; but he felt impelled to put it.

She looked at him sharply, and then averted her eyes.

'If I don't make it now, I need not make it at all,' she answered scornfully. 'Lace bonnets are not any good at Christmas.'

'I think of asking one of the surgeons at the London Hospital to come down and have a look at

my patient,' went on Doctor Dilton, after he had decided not to make any mention of his conversation to his companion. 'He ought to get on better than he does. It won't cost anything, you know,' he added hastily.

'You intend to ask for *that* fruit, then?' suggested Mr. Hay.

'Yes ; I do not mind putting myself under an obligation of that sort to a fellow-professional.'

'Of course I am quite a stranger to these people,' began Mr. Hay hesitatingly, 'and I should not like to offer them money.'

The doctor nodded.

'But if I left a certain sum with any one—you, for instance,' he went on more boldly—'could not you use it for Mr. Palthorpe's benefit as might be required?'

Doctor Dilton shook his head.

'I could not,' he answered, 'and, to be quite plain, if I could I would not. Such a charge would be quite out of my line ; I never did such a thing, and I believe I may say I never will. It is very kind of you to think of giving assistance, but if I were you I should not offer help. When a man is down, you have to deal with a woman, and I always imagine it is best to have no dealings with women.'

'Surely, however, there are exceptions to all rules,' suggested Mr. Hay, feeling a little vexed and a great deal as if he had received a sudden slap in the face.

'There may be,' answered the doctor, 'but I should not imagine Mrs. Palthorpe to be that exception. In the first place, even if a person don't admire her, she is far too handsome—she is undeniably handsome, you know ; and in the next, there is something about her I don't understand and that I don't want to understand.'

'What is it like?' asked Mr. Hay, with an assumption of care-

lessness; while, absurd though it may seem, the doctor's words pierced his vanity as if they had been directed against himself.

'I don't know: you have not seen her angry as I have. It is not professional for me to talk in this way; but if one sees a danger-signal and another man does not, it is but fair to call his attention to it. I was talking about Mrs. Palthorpe; if you ever make her angry, or if anybody else makes her angry in your presence, look at her eyes.'

Mr. Hay had seen her angry and looked at her eyes, and he knew what was coming.

'When thunder is about, there is often one black cloud in which fire seems hidden, and you can tell that lightning is lying there biding its time. When she is annoyed there is a fire in Mrs. Palthorpe's eyes just like that. Whether it means much I can't tell; all I do know is, I should not care to be in the line of the lightning when it struck.'

There was a dead silence for a

moment. Mr. Hay was the first to break it.

'We shall have more rain, I fancy,' he remarked.

'I hope so, it will do good,' answered the doctor. And as he spoke he stopped at the gate of the cottage, where certainly Mr. Palthorpe's flowers looked all the worse for the late heavy showers.

'Would you mind—would you be so kind as just to take these things in for me?' then said Mr. Hay hurriedly, as if he had been walking fast and was out of breath. 'I—I don't want to go in this evening; it—is getting late, and I would rather not intrude.'

'I won't go in again, either. I'll leave them and be with you in a moment,' said the doctor. And taking the baskets, filled so daintily with fruit, he walked up to the door, looking very thoughtful and perplexed.

'Will he stay away now,' he considered, 'or will he come again? With all my heart and soul I hope he won't come again.'

KEEPING UP APPEARANCES.

MAN is very like the butterfly in his faculty of assimilating himself with his surroundings. We are told that the variety of colours to be observed on the wings of a butterfly is due to the different herbs and flowers it selects for its food. In like manner men reflect in their life and tastes the spirit of the age in which they live. In the old martial days men were soldiers, or they were nothing—proud of the right to bear arms and of the followers who swelled their retinue. In the superstitious days men affected to be bookish, and to be under the influence of the lore of the schools. In the fop-pish days men thought it incumbent upon themselves to care only for lace and ruffles, paint and powder, and 'the nice conduct of a clouded cane.' So we, who now have the happiness to live under the rule of a plutocracy, are content with nothing less than an imitation of the luxury and wealth of our neighbour. No matter what our income is, or what our social position be, we must affect, by our airs and establishment, to be quite on a level with the surroundings of the plutocrat. We might occupy a modest tenement, healthy and well built, the rent of which would exactly suit the tenuity of our purse; but as it does not happen to be situated in a fashionable neighbourhood, we must pinch and stint to take up our quarters in hastily run-up houses near the haunts patronised by 'the swells.' If we cannot keep a carriage we must at least

pay a heavy bill to the stable-keeper round the corner for the use of that slow and ill-hung conveyance called a fly. We must give dinners, contracted at so much a head from the confectioner, with the greengrocer in to wait, and perhaps the aid of a friend's footman to make our limited establishment look more like the real thing. We send our daughters to superior scholastic seminaries, where they learn a great deal of useless knowledge, and our sons to crack public schools, where they acquire expensive tastes, and learn, if they learn anything, to be ashamed of the comparative humbleness of their father's station. Though we are the veriest of earthen pots we must sail down the stream with our neighbour, cast perhaps out of the most precious metals, and scheme and lie and deceive to conceal the commonness of our delf-ware, and affect to be, if not genuine silver, at least electroplate.

Nor is this mania for assuming to be what we are not difficult to be accounted for. The introduction of commerce into the ranks of the gentle has, as was to be expected, made the influence of a plutocracy most felt in what is called general society. In the old days, when blood kept itself to itself, and only genius was admitted within its cold and exclusive circles, hospitalities were conducted in a simpler and more modest fashion; the style of furniture was quieter, the establish-

ment less numerous, the dinners less pretentious, and the whole mode of life was arranged on a plainer and less artificial basis. But with the usurpation of money, ostentation was inevitable. There never was a time in our domestic history when wealth has been more lavishly pressed into the service of pride and hospitality than at the present day. House-rents in the new region of South Kensington are an income; the dinners to which we are invited seem to have for their object not how many dishes we can eat, but how many we can send away; not a ball can be given but the most extravagant of floral decorations are indulged in. And then the prices we pay for our horses, our carriages, our yachts, our hounds, our fancy stock, our china, *bric-à-brac*, chiming clocks, antique furniture, mirrors, pictures, rare editions, and all the rest of the luxuries and requirements that follow in the train of a plutocracy! We complain of the cost of living; rather we should complain of the rate of living. The one thing, and the only one thing, on which a young Englishman spends less than his grandfather is in dress—the wigs, the ruffles, the velvet, the lace, the jewelled sword, are things of the past, and their abolition, though a sad matter for the tailor, is a source of great gratification to his customer. When an elderly man recalls the days of his youth, and thinks of the dinners he ate, the balls he danced at, the old family coach in which he drove out, the prices he paid for his dogs and his hunters, the modest manner in which he returned the hospitalities he received, he must feel as if he were not only living in another age, but in another country. Ostentation—the ostentation which is to wealth what

the pedigree is to birth—is written in lurid letters upon all our acts. Comfort, a graceful kindness, an attentive hospitality, still exist; but their presence is scarcely perceptible, thanks to the vanity and vulgarity of ostentation. We give dinners, not so much to entertain our friends as to display the cunning of our cook, which means money; the great people we can collect together, which also means money; the pictures on the walls, our plate, our servants, our wine, the perfect appointments of our house, all which, being interpreted, signify money—money, and ‘Who are you? and I, your host, can buy you up, and am as good as anybody.’ We crowd our rooms, not because we wish to see our friends, but to show the extent of our acquaintance, and because the greatest misery of the greatest number is a social decree at balls and receptions, which must not be disputed. We fill our country houses like an hotel; we preserve till sport and slaughter are the same thing; we fill our stables with valuable horses, even if we dare not ride them; we keep a team, though, perhaps, a friend has to drive it; in spite of our sea-sickness we hoist our club-flag, and own a two-hundred-ton yacht. From Dan to Beersheba it is not waste, but prodigality, profusion, and a luxury so unbounded and elaborate that it ceases to be comfort.

Nor do matters end here. Let the rich spend as they like; they must stand or fall according to their own consciences. But where wealth rules supreme its throne will inevitably be surrounded by a host of imitators. The frog must try to swell himself to the size of the bull, and the earthenware vessel will insist upon sailing down the social stream with his metallic superior. Since wealth is

the standard of excellence, many will pretend either to be richer than they are or better than they are. The vinegar will call itself *vin ordinaire*; the *vin ordinaire* will affect to be Lafitte; and the Lafitte would give all the juices of its grape to be considered '42 port. Your earthenware pot, with his few hundreds a year, must attempt the glitter of the silver vase; with an indifferent cook and a limited establishment he must forsooth imitate the dinners of the plutocrat; his wife and daughters must dress as wealthy fashion dictates; he must quit town, no matter at what pecuniary inconvenience, at a certain season in the year; in short, he must keep up appearances.

When the social history of the latter part of the nineteenth century comes to be written, it will be found that a large share of the unhealthy speculations afloat, of the frauds of directors of City companies, of the card scandals and turf tricks that have of late been so prevalent, is due entirely to the haste after wealth and the keeping up of so-called appearances—appearances which have not unfrequently ended in club expulsion, the Court of Bankruptcy, and the prison-cell. Whichever side we look, we see the knee bent and the hand outstretched to attain a higher rung on the social ladder. The honest yeoman, whose fathers have farmed for generations the same old acres, now transforms his farmhouse into a modern villa, teaches his daughters French and music, regards the bucolic swagger of his son as a sign of independence, and brings up his family so that they are discontented with their own position, yet not fitted to enter the class above them. Who has not seen in village parish churches these damsels gaily attired in a burlesque of the

Paris fashions, smarting because they are ignored by the ladies of the squire and the daughters of the parson, the doctor, and the attorney? Well might the genial old pagan cry out: How comes it to pass that no one lives content with his condition? The peasant wishes to be a farmer, the farmer wishes to be a landed gentleman, and the landed gentry often covet the blood-red hand of the baronet or the coronet of the peer. A change has taken place in the name of things very expressive of the ambition and restless discontent around us. The working man is an artisan, the shop is an emporium, the counter-jumper is an assistant, the tradesman is an artist, the traveller is a commercial gentleman, the clerk is an *employé*, and the 'young person' is a young lady. Not to be called esquire or a gentleman amounts almost at the present day to a complimentary distinction.

Thanks to the examples set us by a plutocracy, an air of wealth and fashion is stamped, or essayed to be stamped, upon every member of the community. The young man, whose father dined at a tavern for eighteenpence, went half-price to the pit, and put on his dress clothes only on great state occasions, now dines at his club in evening costume, educates his taste as to dry champagne, and pays half-a-guinea for his stall at the theatre. If he has the means, there is no difficulty in his gratifying his tastes; if he has not the means, he must obtain them by superior skill in billiards, pigeon-shooting, whist or *écarté*, or by running into debt. If he is genial and popular, he can toady the rich; if he have a handle to his name, he can let himself out to second-rate plutocrats, who will feed him, mount him, and occasionally lend him money; but, at

whatever cost to his self-respect or hazard to his honour, he must 'be in the swim,' and do as other men do. 'Rem si possis recte; si non, quocunque modo rem,' is his maxim.

Society is man's leisure but woman's profession, it was therefore to be expected that the new order of things would cause a revolution in the habits and aspirations of the female sex. At the present day a magnificent career of social successes is offered to a woman of wealth and tact. She need not be a beauty, she need not be high-born; she need but spend her husband's money with profusion, and choose her friends with judgment. There is still a Faubourg St. Germain amongst us; but it is the Faubourg St. Honoré which gives the better dinners, the more brilliant balls, drives the more splendid horses, is the easier of access, and consequently is the more popular court, receiving the greater amount of homage. To be admitted into the plutocracy you require but wealth; to lead it wealth must be allied with rank—which does not necessarily imply birth—or with beauty or with wit. To the clever wife of the plutocrat, society is as open as is the Bar to an ambitious advocate. She labours under no disabilities which cannot be removed by gold. She will be received at Court, her husband can obtain a seat in the House of Commons, she will attend Ministerial receptions, there is nothing to prevent her one day giving them. If her dinners are good, she will never lack the guests she desires; if at her balls the right people are always found, the floor in good condition, and the supper excellent, our gilded youth will not stay away; in the autumn her country house will be full; provided she spends money, suc-

cess and troops of friends will attend her path. If she be witty or beautiful, she can afford to spend less; if she be vulgar, she must spend more: social distinction has been reduced to a mere question of arithmetic. None of the restrictions which in former times existed are now in force. A presentation at Court has ceased to be a distinction; dames may attend every drawing-room, men may attend every *levée*, yet never be asked to State ball or concert. Save for the most open of all hospitalities, the fact of presentation is of little service on the Continent, except it be accompanied by personal introductions to the ambassador or other representative of English interests. There is no high-born clique or powerful coterie ruling the social world with iron sway, and requiring all who seek for admission to do homage and present their credentials. Society is but a general shuffle of the human pack, where the two of spades can hang on to the queen of diamonds, and the knave is everywhere. The clever woman or the ambitious man, willing and capable of defraying the necessary expenditure, needs never despair of admission into its elastic circle, and one day may even hope to obtain supremacy. The days of Almack's are fled, and have been succeeded by the days of Prince's and the Orleans Club.

Thus the social equality that exists amongst us at the present time is at the root of this straining after appearances. Everybody is as good as everybody else, and no one will honestly acknowledge that he has a superior. The man of wealth considers himself as good as the peer, for, thanks to his banker's book, the plutocrat can do everything that the aristocrat aims at. The man of small means, and perhaps with a little

gentle blood in his veins, feels his pride hurt when he sees his neighbour, whom he regards as his inferior, living in a superior style, and forthwith he strains every nerve to 'cut the vulgar snob out.' Our friend 'Arry reads in the journals of society the doings of the upper classes, fancies he dresses himself like a 'swell,' and abjures the companionship of his brother clerks. To be modest, and to acknowledge yourself poor and not be ashamed of the fact, are to cut yourself off from the world at large and to live alone. It is true that a man, by this honest and manly conduct, will maintain his sense of self-respect, and be free from all the anxieties and annoyances of the pretender; but in this world it is not given to every one to have the courage which true nobility of character always inspires.

Yet, after all, the shifts and schemes that have been planned and carried out by him who 'keeps up appearances,' upon whom do they impose? There are men who lie, yet never deceive, and the keeper-up of appearances is one of these. Who is taken in by the effort of the struggling professional man to hold his own with his wealthier neighbour; by the small provincial man who pretends that he is 'of the county'; by him who lives by his wits, yet pretends to exist by the solid advantages of a good private property, or by all the dodges, meannesses, and base tricks of the

social impostor? If men only knew that their own designs are as plainly seen through as they themselves see through the schemes of their neighbour, there would be more of truth and less of sham in the world. No one ever lowered himself by openly admitting what his means really were, and the actual position he occupied in the social scale; whilst every man who has pretended to be other than he was has been found out, and has made himself the subject of ridicule. There is nothing despicable in truth; it is only sham and pretence that are unworthy. If you are poor, there is no necessity to vaunt your poverty; but you deceive no one but yourself in affecting to be rich, whilst the day of reckoning will assuredly come. Keeping up appearances is only an elegant phrase for 'letting somebody else in.' Hence the Nemesis of debts, disgrace, and perhaps the dungeon. A life of worry, of pretentious extravagance, ever followed by a severe and mean economy, of secrecy always in fear of exposure; with self-respect, true manliness, and all sense of comfort completely gone—these are the results of the keeping up of appearances. All of us have different views of life, but, to our imperfect gaze, this game is not worth the candle. We never yet met the man who kept up appearances whom, in the long-run, appearances ever succeeded in keeping.

LOVE AND WAR.*

BY R. MOUNTENEY JEPHSON,

AUTHOR OF 'TOM BULLKLEY OF LISSINGTON,' 'A PINK WEDDING,' ETC.

CHAPTER I

'Don't talk nonsense, Georgina ! I maintain that Puddleton is making itself utterly contemptible.'

Thus spake, with considerable, though I am sorry to add not unusual, asperity, Joshua Buddlecombe, Esquire, the worshipful mayor of Puddleton. Of course the reader has heard of Puddleton, for Puddleton is famous for the manufacture of buttons ; and who is there amongst us so dead to his own comfort or to the opinions of others as to forswear the use of those little articles ? As Mr. Buddlecombe delivered this remark he took up a dogmatic position on his hearthrug—for there can be dogmatism in a position as well as in a proposition—and surveyed with a don't-you-dare-to-contradict-me glare his wife, to whom he had just addressed the marital injunction, 'don't talk nonsense.' Mrs. Buddlecombe, in whose mind familiarity with these humours had bred, if not contempt, at all events a certain amount of indifference to them, merely shrugged her shoulders and calmly continued her knitting.

'Notwithstanding all my efforts as the mayor of this town,' continued Mr. Buddlecombe, evidently working himself up into a rage, and, as far as could be judged

from his countenance, he had not to work very hard,—'notwithstanding indignation meetings convened by me, and protests and petitions and representations, Puddleton is made a military quarter ; and instead of resenting the injury, Puddleton dresses itself out in flags and determines upon giving a public welcome to these "Crimean heroes," as it chooses to dub those red-coated drumming and trumpeting individuals, who have just been practising their legalised trade of wholesale murder on a pretty large scale.'

'Nonsense, Joshua ; think of the glory !' said Mrs. Buddlecombe, waving a knitting-needle with the air of a conquering heroine.

'Nonsense, Georgina ; think of the depression in the button trade !' rejoined Mr. Buddlecombe. 'Now if soldiers were habitually to fire away their buttons in action, war wouldn't be such an utterly senseless proceeding as it is now. I repeat that, with the advent this day of the military, Puddleton falls morally ; and my year's tenure of office, instead of being the brightest page, is for ever a blot on the hitherto unspotted annals of Puddleton.'

'Well,' said Mrs. Buddlecombe, 'I beg to state that on *my* part I am delighted to see that Puddleton is capable of such patriotism.'

'Pshaw !' ejaculated Mr. Buddlecombe.

'Yes, Joshua, I repeat I am

* The author reserves to himself the right of dramatising this story, or any portion of it.

delighted. From my experience of the place I really thought that Puddleton's soul was incapable of rising above buttons and their manufacture. I am glad, however, to find that the sordid employment of making buttons, to which Puddleton, from the lowest to the highest, from the youngest to the oldest inhabitant, is addicted, has not deadened its mind to all feelings of glory and patriotism.'

'Stuff and nonsense!' spluttered Mr. Buddlecombe, red with wrath, and further manifesting his indignation by blowing out his cheeks and rumpling up his hair all over his head. 'The idea of disparaging the virtuous, the ingenious, the useful employment of making buttons, and glorifying the disgraceful calling of slashing and cutting and shooting your fellow-creatures! It's outrageous! To hear such sentiments proceed from the lips of any woman would be shocking; but when that woman is a lady, and that lady is a mayoress, and that mayoress is the wife of my bosom, it makes me tingle from head to foot with shame!'

Mrs. Buddlecombe was not in the least awed by this flowing climax.

'That sounds all very well, I daresay, Joshua, as a rhetorical display; but then, too, it's also very like a display of fireworks—a great deal of fizzing and spluttering, and then a bang, leaving every one in the dark. I maintain that making buttons is an utterly contemptible occupation compared with that of defending your country at the risk of your life. What,' concluded Mrs. Buddlecombe, rising from her seat with the dignity befitting a mayoress,—'what would society be without its defenders, Joshua?'

'What would society be with-

out its buttons, Georgina? I blush to think of society in a buttonless condition.'

And here the virtuous Mayor of Puddleton assumed an air of awful propriety.

'You're really too ridiculous, Joshua,' retorted Mrs. Buddlecombe, as she walked to a low French window and looked out into the garden, partly to see if her daughter, Florence Buddlecombe, were returning from her morning's ride, and partly to hide her own chagrin at having, perhaps, got rather the worst of the little argument on the society question. 'And you are so illogical, Joshua; so provokingly illogical. Soldiers must be somewhere; and if they were not at Puddleton they would have to be at some other town. So they might just as well be here as anywhere else.'

'Not at all,' snapped Mr. Buddlecombe, turning sharp round on his wife. 'Soldiers should be nowhere. They shouldn't exist. What's a standing army but a standing slur on civilisation, a perpetual menace to peace and goodwill amongst men, a dangerous tool in the hands of ambition, a gigantic fraud on the ratepayer, a fierce seething whirlpool of temptation, into which—'

'My dear, my dear, if you won't think of me, think of apoplexy and drop the subject. If you look at that mirror behind, you'll be positively startled at your appearance.'

'Don't dare to make me the subject of your buffoonery, Georgina,' said the irascible gentleman; 'and don't dare to interrupt me either. If I am red in the face it is with blushing for you. I shall not, however, for the sake of a few gross personalities on your part, outrage all that is great and noble in my nature by denying it that

outlet which, in its very proper indignation, it demands. I *shall* have my say! What is the whole army, to put it in its mildest light, but a ridiculous anomaly? We visit punishment with the utmost rigour of the law on the heads of wretched prize-fighters, who only maul each other about with their fists; and yet we maintain, at an enormous expense, thousands upon thousands of an infinitely more noxious variety of the species whose recognised business is slaughter and carnage, with every description of deadly engine that misdirected science can invent for their use. I employ the expression "*misdirected science*" advisedly. From a careful calculation which I have made with the view to exposing, by means of my next pamphlet, the unspeakable iniquity of war in, perhaps, its most shocking light, I find that a 68-pounder gun—which, I am told, is now the *chef-d'œuvre* of murderous invention—would furnish enough material for exactly 1,841,537 metal buttons of the largest size we turn out—such buttons in fact as might be supplied to charity-schools.

This last reflection was so painful that Mr. Buddlecombe paused, and, with a deep sigh, sought consolation in his snuff-box.

'How much more noble,' he continued, in somewhat calmer, though sad, tones, as nasal titillation shed its soothing influence over his soul,—'how much more in accordance with the true fitness of things, if Government had converted all this mass of metals into such buttons'—here he took a final pinch of snuff, accompanied by the gentle soliloquy—'and given me the contract. I have calculated that, allowing eight buttons for each boy—six in front and two behind—I could provide, out of a 68-pounder gun, buttons

for 167,692 boys, and one button over. What a contrast do the two pictures afford! In the one, ghastly hecatombs of slain; in the other, 167,692 smiling, chubby-cheeked charity-boys with eight bright buttons apiece, and one button over. Is not the reflection that the former picture is the chosen one enough to wring the heart of any right-thinking man, woman, or child? Is not this, I say, enough—'

'Quite, Joshua,' said Mrs. Buddlecombe. 'I say so too. *Quite* enough. No more, thank you.'

'In spite of these unseemly interruptions, Georgina, I shall continue to speak out my mind,' said the worshipful gentleman to whom degenerate Puddleton had turned a deaf ear on this subject, and who therefore, like most orators who cannot obtain a hearing abroad, made the most of his grievance at home. Not that he got much sympathy there, but still he could command an audience in the shape of his wife, and he exercised his prerogative. 'O Georgina,' he continued, 'it cuts me to the heart to contemplate this return for my devotion. Is it for this that I am ever ready to be your slave and to victimise myself for you? I go out to dinner-parties frequently with you.'

'Only where there's a good cook, Joshua.'

'I do not pretend to be an angel, Georgina. I am only mortal. And it is as one mortal speaking to another that I now attempt to awaken in your heart some sense of duty you owe. Think of the sacrifices I make for your sake, and of the constant attention I show you. I give you beforehand all the speeches I am going to make on different occasions. I drink to your health frequently in the best of wine. I sometimes spoke a choice cigar in the even-

ings after dinner in order that your senses may be pleasantly regaled with the delicate aroma. O, do you know the ingratitude of woman is shocking, shocking! Then again, don't I often—'

'Pray don't continue the harrowing narration,' said Mrs. Buddlecombe, with a provoking assumption of extreme contrition. 'I am quite aware, Joshua, of the fearful infliction it is to you to eat a good dinner, especially when you're very hungry, which it seems to me you always are; and of the beautiful self-abnegation you evince when indulging in the delightful pastime of playing at Bright and Gladstone; and of the violence you do to your feelings, as a confirmed smoker, when you inhale the fragrant fumes of a choice havanna. O Joshua, what a heartrending picture you have drawn of the terrible sacrifices you make for my sake! It's quite affecting. It's more than I can bear.'

Here Mrs. Buddlecombe buried her face in her handkerchief, and gave vent to a succession of ironical sobs, which gradually developed into an uncontrollable burst of hearty laughter.

The mayor's wrath was terrible to see; for irony and ridicule are the two keenest shafts that pierce the human soul.

'Georgina,' he exclaimed, 'there is not the noblest action of self-sacrifice from which, if I were to perform it, you would not withhold all credit on the grounds that it was done to please myself. I verily do believe that if I were to lay my head down on the block this moment and have it cut off for your sake, your first remark would be, "O, he likes it. Laying his head down on the block and having it cut off has ever been his favourite pastime from childhood's earliest years."'

Mrs. Buddlecombe merely smiled contemptuously; upon which Mr. Buddlecombe, with increased acrimony, was just taking up another parable, when the sweet fresh voice of a young girl, warbling some joyous little ditty, floated through the open French window. Breaking in upon Mr. Buddlecombe's querulous tones it was like the playful tinkling of a lambkin's bell after the fussy gruff barks of the old sheep-dog.

'There's Florry come in from her morning's ride,' said Mrs. Buddlecombe.

'Yes; now you'll be good enough not to introduce the military topic before her, Georgina,' said Mr. Buddlecombe grimly. 'No more rides for her alone with old Reins, the coachman, now that the neighbourhood will be infested by reprobates in regimentals, I can tell her!'

As the worshipful mayor of Puddleton pronounced this sentence he took up his newspaper and seated himself in an easy-chair. He had just settled down to the money article when the fair young warbler appeared at the open window, and arrested her footsteps and her song to stand surveying her parents with a playful demeanour, which, as regarded Mr. Buddlecombe, was not reciprocated. Florence Buddlecombe was an only child, and was still at the proverbially sweet age of seventeen, though in candour it must be added that she was just on the eve of her eighteenth birthday. With her soft blue eyes, her fair complexion, and her hair,

'A golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men,'

she would have carried off the palm for beauty in most assemblages of pretty girls. Then, too, she was an heiress; and when

viewed from this standpoint, she was supernaturally lovely. She had normally a sweet bright expression, but on this especial morning a heart filled with a secret joy illumined her countenance until it was radiant with health, beauty, and happiness.

As she stood at the French window, her lithe figure shown off to the greatest advantage in her close-fitting riding-habit, a jaunty hat perched knowingly on her well-shaped little head, her eyes dancing with joy, her cherry lips parted into a smile which showed the whitest and evenest row of teeth imaginable, and her soft cheeks aglow with the exercise in the fresh morning air, she formed a sweet picture, at which Mrs. Buddlecombe gazed with fond and admiring eyes, but which only drew from Mr. Buddlecombe a low growl that he didn't know what she had to grin about so this morning, as he glanced at the fair vision from over the top of his newspaper.

It must not be supposed that Mr. Buddlecombe was always thus—a bear with a sore head. The fact is that the reader, while having had the honour of introduction to so great a personage as the Mayor of Puddleton, has also had the misfortune to make that magnate's acquaintance for the first time when he was boiling over with indignation at the conduct of Puddleton, on which he himself has been sufficiently the exponent.

'Well, papa,' said Florence gaily, as she advanced, and playfully tapped her father's newspaper with her riding-whip, 'why don't you have a flag flying from our flagstaff? Puddleton's *en fête*, and our house looks quite conspicuous by the absence of bunting.'

A savage grunt from behind the newspaper was all the reply.

'Let your papa alone, Florry darling,' said Mrs. Buddlecombe. 'He's busy reading the paper. Come and tell me what you've been doing.'

Thus enjoined, the light-hearted Florry rattled away, regardless, or rather, in the exuberance of her spirits, unconscious, of the nods and winks and frowns with which her mother sought to warn her off the dangerous ground.

'O, such fun, mamma! I met my dear old godpapa, Mr. Bolitho, riding on his cob, and he says the regiment will arrive at the railway-station very soon, and he was going up there to see; and he has promised to ride down to tell us when they're coming, so that we may go to the lodge and see them pass. And what *do* you think the dear funny old thing said? He joked me so, and said I should be having half a dozen young officers at my feet, and that I mustn't get conceited and turn up my nose at old fellows like him. And the dear old thing laughed so, and said I wasn't to go falling in love with more than one at a time, and—'

Here Mr. Buddlecombe started to his feet and dashed his newspaper down.

'Silence, prattling idiot!' he roared. 'Babbling booby, be still!'

In one bound Florence was by her mother's side, where she stood cowering while Mr. Buddlecombe continued to pour out the vials of his wrath.

'Look here, Florence! If I ever hear another word of this vile trash I'll pack you off to your aunt Virginia in the North. Old Bolitho is a confounded old fool, and I consider him a very improper person to be your godfather. He isn't fit to be at large, blasting youthful minds like a deadly upas-tree, and should be chained

up. He's "such a dear funny old thing," is he? And "you'll have half a dozen young officers at your feet," will you? Much more likely they'll have my feet at *them*. And you "mustn't go falling in love with—" I'll tell you what it is: I'll take precious good care you don't. As long as this neighbourhood is contaminated by these scamps in regimentals, you'll have uncommon few opportunities of seeing them at your feet, and all the rest of the trash of that miserable old dotard Bolitho. You'll be confined to these grounds, except when you go out with me; and if when you're out with me you even so much as glance at one of these puppies, I'll pack you off to your aunt Virginia in the North by the very next train. So mark my words, my vivacious young lady.'

And here Mr. Buddlecombe turned on his heel and paced up and down the room, muttering to himself,

'Preposterous! That a girl to whom I give thirty thousand pounds on her wedding-day, and on whose education no expense has been spared, should be guilty of such abominable sentiments!'

Suddenly Mr. Buddlecombe stopped his furious promenade up and down the room; and, turning sharp round, addressed Florence in ironical tones:

'I think you suggested that I should hoist a flag. A capital idea! Yes, I *shall* hoist a flag to celebrate the entry of the military into Puddleton.'

So saying, Mr. Buddlecombe bustled out of the room in a grimly mysterious manner.

CHAPTER II.

'Don't cry, my dear Florry,' said Mrs. Buddlecombe; for Florence's great blue eyes, which a few moments before had been dancing with fun and joy, were now dim with tears. 'You know your father's extraordinary antipathy to the military, Florry, and really you should have been more careful. There, never mind!'

'O yes, I know; it was very stupid of me,' said Florry, smiling through her tears. 'But I couldn't help it, mamma. My heart is so full this morning that I am even more impulsive than usual.'

'So full, Florry! Full of what? And what is there in this morning to fill it so very full of anything?' asked her mother.

Florence played nervously with her riding-whip, blushed crimson, bit her lips, became pale, and then flushed again.

'Come, Florry, tell me,' said her mother, in gentle affectionate tones, at the same time drawing her arm fondly round her daughter's slim waist.

'Well, mamma,' said Florence, apparently engaged in an absorbing examination of the gold mounting on her riding-whip, 'do you remember Mr. Warriner whom we met at Folkestone, when you and I were there alone together two summers ago?'

'Yes, perfectly.'

'Well, this is his regiment, just returned from the Crimea, that's expected at Puddleton to-day.'

'Is it really? I am sure, child, I had quite forgotten what regiment he belonged to.'

'I hadn't, mamma. I—I think you liked Mr. Warriner, didn't you?'

'Yes, particularly so, Florry. Handsome but not conceited, manly and yet gentle, thoroughly self-possessed and yet not forward,

I thought him altogether one of the most charming young men I had ever met.'

This pauegyric brought the blood mantling proudly to Florence's cheek, and encouraged her to speak her mind out a little more plainly.

'You would not be astonished then to hear, mamma, that I—I—'

Here maidenly bashfulness stopped her, and Mrs. Buddlecombe was left to pick up the delicate thread of their discourse.

'Not in the least astonished, Florry dear. I should have been astonished a few minutes ago; but I now know your secret without your having told it to me. Ah, Florry, it does not necessarily require a tongue to tell a tale of love. There are a thousand other modes and indications just as eloquent as, and more so very often than, words. Your father, for instance, first told *his* love by means of—mutton-chops!'

'Mutton-chops, mamma!' screamed Florry. 'O, how horrible!'

'Yes, mutton-chops, Florry. And now, having told you so much, I feel I had better tell you all. My mother was passionately fond of dogs, especially little ones, of which sort she always had three or four about her; and she frequently declared that they were better judges of human nature than humanity itself. One day, in the hearing of Joshua, who was paying us a visit, she stated her determination never to allow me to marry a man towards whom her dogs exhibited any marked antipathy, "for," said she, "I am convinced they, in common with all their species, possess the keenest intuition of good and evil in human nature." I did not notice it, but my mother did, and told me, some time afterwards, that upon this remark of hers a look

of gloomy despair clouded Joshua's brow, for he was not popular with my mother's pets; and after a visit to us he always took his departure considerably damaged about the shoe-laces and the bottoms of his trousers, owing to their persistent hostility. On his next visit, however, there was an extraordinary change in the behaviour of these little animals. They jumped and frisked about Joshua, and they fawned upon him. They even tried to get into his pocket, and when he went away it was all we could do to prevent them from following him. "There," said my mother, "*that's* the man I should like to see you married to, Georgina. *That's* a man after my own heart." "O, nonsense, mamma," I said; "Mr. Buddlecombe has not an idea of me, I'm sure." "I'm sorry for it, my dear," said my mother; "for I am convinced he has an honest nature and a kind heart, or my dogs would never take to him as they do." The next visit Joshua paid us, the same sort of thing went on. The little dogs would not leave him for a moment, and they hung about him with a fondness which my mother said was quite touching, and which raised him higher than ever in her estimation. He was, she said, without exception, the best man she had ever come across; for never had she met a man to whom her little dogs had taken such a violent fancy. Unfortunately, my brother, your uncle Tom, Florry, came in to show us a mastiff he had just bought from a man in the streets. "I don't suppose he's seen an ounce of meat for the last fortnight," said your uncle Tom, in his pleasant off-hand manner; "he's half-starved now; but when I feed him up a bit he'll be an out-and-out stunner, and as big as a don-

key." "He seems quite fascinated with Mr. Buddlecombe; what an extraordinary, what a beautiful, I may say sublime, influence you seem to exercise over dogs!" exclaimed my mother, in tones of the deepest admiration. These words were hardly out of her mouth when a scene ensued which I shall never forget, Florry. The mastiff just took one sniff at Joshua, and the next moment Joshua was on his back on the hearth-rug, with the huge brute over him, devouring his very vitals, as we all thought to our horror. We soon thankfully discovered, however, that your father had sustained no personal injury. The skirts of his greatcoat were torn right off, and three mutton-chops were transferred with wondrous rapidity from the pocket of that garment to the interior of the voracious monster. The whole thing then flashed through my brain, and I may add my heart as well, that Joshua was trying to win my young untried affections, and then my hand, by first gaining the good-will of my mother. But, Florry dear, never let your father know that I told you this little episode in his courtship. He has never been able to bear the sight of a mutton-chop since. But with *me* it is different. Mutton-chops are always tenderly associated in *my* mind with the first dawn of love—'

Here Mrs. Buddlecombe paused for a moment, and then added dreamily,

'Especially the flaps, for it was those portions which we first saw protruding from Joshua's pocket.'

'O mamma, how horrible!' exclaimed Florence; 'how atrociously unromantic! I'm glad the first dawn of *my* love has no such vile associations. No,' added the young girl rapturously, 'it is linked in fond memory with the warring of

the elements as we stood together one stormy afternoon on the Lees at Folkestone, and gazed down on the white-crested waves of the English Channel—'

'With the *chops* of the Channel, in short,' said Mrs. Buddlecombe, with a sly smile. 'You see, Florry, there's a strong similarity in our cases, after all.'

'O mamma,' screamed Florry, stuffing her fingers into her ears, and laughing, 'I won't listen; it's sacrilege.'

'Well, but seriously, Florry darling, you're in love, eh?'

'O, irretrievably!' replied Florence, opening her eyes wide, and looking very solemn and determined.

'I am sorry for it. I had no idea it had been anything more than just a mild little passing boy-and-girlish flirtation. I am *very* sorry for it, Florry.'

'Why, mamma, why?' asked Florry, peering eagerly into her mother's eyes, while a startled look of pain and fear flitted into the fair young face.

'Because, my child,' replied Mrs. Buddlecombe, with a steadfast but tender gaze, 'I fear no good can come of it. Your father will never countenance anything of the sort. I tremble to think of the effect the disclosure would have upon him. It would be like putting a lighted match into a barrel of gunpowder. Such is his blind unreasoning antipathy to the army that I believe he would sooner see you married to a field labourer than to a field-marshal.'

'It makes me tremble too when I think of it; but I have an idea, mamma, that it will all come right in the end,' said Florence, with that truly youthful belief in 'the end.' 'And, O, after *all* the suspense of the last eighteen months, while he has been away in that dreadful land, that awful

valley of the shadow of death, I feel this morning too happy in the consciousness of his safe return to think of anything more than that. What a happy day this is compared with that dark day of horror when I read in the newspapers, "Severely wounded, Lieutenant Algernon Fitzmaurice Warriner, Queen's Own Fusiliers"! How I passed the time and kept up appearances before you all until the next mail brought better news, I know not!

'Hush, Florry, here's your father!' said Mrs. Buddlecombe, who was not quite so intent in the listening as Florence was in the telling.

'I've hoisted my flag to celebrate the entry of the military into Puddleton,' said Mr. Buddlecombe, as he came fussing into the room; 'and I've derived a certain amount of gloomy satisfaction from hoisting it half-mast high. If I had only had a black flag with a Death's head and crossbones, I'd have hoisted *that*. But I hadn't, and so I used the Union Jack upside down instead. And if I only had sufficient experience in explosives, I'd further console myself by firing off minute-guns; or if my musical education had not been neglected, I'd play a solo on the muffled drum. That could hardly be construed into a manifestation of rejoicing by even the most bigoted admirer of the military. Moreover, if—'

Here a heavy footstep in the verandah outside, tramping in time to a hearty gruff-toned rendering of the 'British Grenadiers,' cut short Mr. Buddlecombe in the full flow of his rhetoric.

'Bother Bolitho!' he ejaculated. 'Everybody that comes to the house this morning seems to think it necessary to herald his or her approach with a song. First of all, Florence comes in caterwaul-

ing, and then this old porpoise Bolitho comes pounding along my verandah, and making a noise like a rhinoceros in a fit, which I've no doubt he calls singing.'

At this point, after humming the martial air up to the last moment before coming into view, Mr. Bolitho entered the room with a beaming smile on his fine red old face, his low-crowned broad-brimmed beaver in one hand and an enormous nosegay in the other. Mr. Bolitho, or 'old Joe Bolitho,' as he was generally called in Puddleton and the neighbourhood, was a Puddletonian born and bred. He and Mr. Buddlecombe had been boys together, a fact he was always jovially alluding to. He was a fine hearty old fellow of about eighteen stone in weight and sixty years of age. He was not exactly a congenial companion for a person whose nervous system was completely deranged; but for any one in fair condition of mind and body, who did not mind a noise and an occasional prod in the ribs, there could not have been a jollier associate than old Joe Bolitho. By the young of both sexes he was idolised.

'Ah, how are you, my dear Mrs. Buddlecombe?' said Mr. Bolitho, as he threw his hat and the nosegay on to a table, and then seized the lady by both her hands. 'Well, Florry, little girl, seen you before this morning. How are you, Buddle?' this last inquiry being accompanied by a poke in the worshipful ribs.

'Quite well, thank you, "mine old familiar friend,"' replied Mr. Buddlecombe, resenting the liberty by drawing himself up into a dignified attitude, which was completely lost on Joe Bolitho.

'That's right. With the tow-row-row-de-dow-dow of the—Excuse me, Mrs. Buddlecombe, excuse me, my dear lady, I am in

such a state of martial enthusiasm that I can't help being a little demonstrative.'

'I admire it in you, Mr. Bolitho. I only wish you could instil a little of your fine patriotic feeling into a certain other individual,' said Mrs. Buddlecombe, while Mr. Buddlecombe sought refuge in his newspaper, which was his usual sanctuary.

'And what's that enormous bouquet for, Mr. Bolitho?' asked Florence.

'That, Florry! That's for you to throw at the head of the column as it marches past the lodge-gates,' said Mr. Bolitho, seizing the bouquet, and waving it enthusiastically over his head: 'Beauty crowning Valour!'

'Nothing of the sort,' said Mr. Buddlecombe, lowering his newspaper and glaring fiercely over it. 'Florence, if you dare to crown valour I'll send you to bed and stop your pocket-money!'

'Then I shall, Mr. Bolitho!' said Mrs. Buddlecombe, with an extremely majestic bearing, accompanied by an insubordinate glance at her spouse.

'You! Do you consider, Mrs. Buddlecombe, that you are fitted

at your time of life to enact the part of Beauty?'

And here Mr. Buddlecombe, having propounded this question, rose from his chair and awaited the answer with his hands under his coat-tails.

'Certainly,' replied Mrs. Buddlecombe, stung to the quick by this unmanly allusion to a lady's age. 'Certainly; for *you*, Mr. Buddlecombe, are playing the companion *rôle* to such perfection—Beauty and the Beast!'

This last with significant action.

'Ha, ha, ha!' roared old Bolitho. 'Bravo, Mrs. Buddlecombe! I say, Buddle old fellow, that's one to Mrs. B! Ha, ha, ha!'

'It may be one to Mrs. B., Bolitho,' snapped Mr. B.; 'but it's nothing to you. At any rate I wish you wouldn't make such a noise about it.'

'Ha, ha, ha!' again roared the incorrigible old Joe.

'Bolitho should be muffled when he's in a facetious mood, and then one might cajole oneself into the belief that he was only distant thunder,' snarled Mr. Buddlecombe, as he stumped off to his armchair and his newspaper in high dudgeon.

(To be continued).

OUR LONDON NOTE-BOOK.

MR. BRIGHT in a recent speech at Rochdale quoted several remarkable prophetic utterances respecting the discovery of America, and the future greatness of the United States. Some of these, he told his hearers, were made more than 1400 years before the famous voyage of Columbus. It is odd that one of the most singular and striking of these prophecies should have escaped the notice both of Mr. Bright and of Mr. Sumner, the compiler of the work from which Mr. Bright quoted. In the year 1598 our English poet, Samuel Daniel, wrote these lines:

'And who knows whither we may vent
The treasure of our tongue? To what
strange shores

This gain of our best glory may be sent
T'enrich unknowing nations with our
stores?

What worlds in the yet unformed Occi-
dent

May 'come refined with th' accents that
are ours?'

Now those lines were written at a time when there was not a single Englishman settled in America. Every effort to establish an English colony there had been a disastrous failure. Sir Walter Raleigh had fitted out no less than seven expeditions, and spent 40,000*l.*, an enormous sum in those days, in endeavouring to colonise Virginia; but the result was a miserable fiasco. Those of the early settlers who did not leave their bones whitening among the forests and savannahs came back in wretched plight to tell a pitiful tale of famine and pestilence and massacre. All hope of ever founding an American settlement died out; the idea was recognised as

too chimerical to be ever realised. The most far-sighted men shrugged their shoulders and pronounced the thing impossible; and England with a sigh relinquished all hope of colonising America.

Seven years later, on the 19th of December 1606, three small vessels—the largest only 100 tons' burden—set sail from Blackwall. Among the adventurers who manned them was the famous Captain John Smith. The poet was down upon the quay at Blackwall, and saw that little band of pioneers set out upon their quest. Little did he think, doubtless, that in them he saw the germ from which was to spring the fulfilment of his own prophecy. But it was so; for the colony established by Captain John Smith in Virginia gave England her first firm foothold in the New World. It is interesting to think of that unconscious prophet watching with his own eyes the departure of the expedition that was to found an English-speaking community 'in the yet unformed Occident,' which should far eclipse in splendour and wealth and power the wildest dreams of his own imagination. I think, therefore, that this prophecy of Samuel Daniel deserves a place among the most memorable of those 'prophetic voices' to which Mr. Bright made such effective allusion.

A correspondent writes, in reference to a note of mine on Colonel Thornton, in the December number of *London Society*: 'As a

connection of Colonel Thornton's wife, I shall be glad if you will mention in any future notes in *London Society* on Colonel Thornton's amours that the true Mrs. Thornton, his wife, was Elizabeth Cawston of Mundon Hall, Maldon, Essex; and that the marriage took place subsequently to the connection formed with Alicia Meynell. Are you quite sure that this was her name, and not Alicia Massingham? I think in your notes in this month's *London Society*, the fact of the Colonel's marriage is somewhat *prejudicially omitted*. It gives one the impression that there was not at any time a Mrs. Thornton properly so called. I have some recollection of once seeing a *Life of Colonel Thornton*, with an engraving, as frontispiece, of the colonel standing with his gun on his shoulder, and one or two pointers by his side. Will you kindly tell me if you have come across the book? Colonel Thornton owned at one time Allerton Park, which he purchased of the Duke of York for £110,000, and afterwards sold to Lord Thornton.

I am sorry that my omission to mention the colonel's marriage should have been deemed prejudicial to his memory; for I need hardly say I had no intention of in any way injuring his reputation. I was aware that his lawful wife was Elizabeth Cawston; for I have read the case of *Curling v. Thornton*, in which his widow sought to upset the will by which Priscilla Davies and her illegitimate daughter were made the colonel's sole legatees. I have not seen the *Life of Colonel Thornton*, to which my correspondent alludes; but the engraving which she describes is, if I remember rightly, to be found in the *Sporting Magazine* for 1818,

accompanying a memoir of the colonel.

The number of Christmas-cards sent by post this year exceeded every previous record. I am told that not far short of a million were delivered in London alone on Christmas-day. I observe that some indignant Londoners in letters to the newspapers denounce this deluge of cards as 'a new great social evil,' and complain bitterly of its delaying the delivery of 'legitimate correspondence.' I do not wholly agree with these grumblers, because I think the practice serves to some extent to keep up the memory of friendships and acquaintanceships which one is too busy or too lazy to keep up by 'legitimate correspondence.' And it is, moreover, a pretty and touching sentiment that is embodied in this custom of sending Christmas-cards. But though I am not in agreement with those who object to the practice of sending these seasonable *souvenirs* by post because it produces a block in postal traffic, I do object to it on other grounds. It tends to make letter-writing an art less practised than ever; and though I have drifted with other folks into the state of mind which regards correspondence as a bore, yet I often regret that it should be so. I can remember the time when I enjoyed sitting down and spinning a long chatty yarn to an absent friend, and enjoyed perhaps still more receiving one. Before this fashion of Christmas-cards came in, it was generally regarded as a duty to despatch at least one long letter annually to each of one's absent friends. But now even that small epistolary sacrifice on the altar of friendship is deemed unnecessary. And indeed few people nowadays know how to write a letter. How

many can one count among one's acquaintances who are able to put down their thoughts on paper and gossip by post, as was the pleasant fashion years ago, *Consule Planco*? Yet I have learnt more of the real nature of some of my friends from their letters than from their talk. One can often say things in a letter which one would not care to utter orally, because a reticent reserve would check the flow of words. And then in a letter you can have your say out, there is no one to interrupt you. It is your innings, and you make the most of it.

Ah, well, the art of letter-writing, as I say, is dead now. 'Epistolary matter,' says Elia, in that charming letter of his on *Distant Correspondents*, 'usually compriseth three topics—news, sentiment, and puns.' Who would ever dream nowadays of wasting his sentiments or his puns upon a single correspondent? Those who could write good letters are either lazy or selfish. It is either too much trouble to them to put pen to paper, or else they make money by their pens, and grudge writing down gratuitously any thought which may possibly be worth coin of the realm. It is a selfish age, I am afraid, and that is the real secret of these novel devices for giving the lie to the old proverb, 'Out of sight, out of mind.' A lazy and a selfish world, my masters; and so we buy our tokens of affection and our *souvenirs* of friendship ready-made. *Vivent* De la Rue and Eyre & Spottiswoode, with all their tasteful artistic creations, and down with the nuisance of letters! That is the watchword of society now.

Another art that I may also number among those that are dead or moribund is the art of conversation. How many men are there

now, I wonder, who would indorse old Tom Fuller's sentiment that 'the study of books is a languishing and feeble notion that heats not; whereas conversation teaches and exercises at once'? And yet I know of nothing more agreeable in the whole round of social pleasures than lively and sensible conversation; though, on the other hand, there is nothing much more wearisome than the frivolous and silly chatter which passes muster as conversation with the present generation. A few feeble commonplaces about the last new play or novel, a little secondhand scandal from the society journals, a sprinkling of borrowed sarcasms and plagiarised jokes, with a strong dash of vulgar slang, this is what society accepts as conversation nowadays. If you ask me why the art of conversation is becoming, if it has not already become, extinct, I do not know that I could find any very satisfactory reason to give you. I do not know that we of to-day are more shallow than the men and women of other days, that we are less well-informed, less capable of forming opinions of our own, or less fluent of tongue. Perhaps we are too much addicted to what is called, in the current slang, 'shop.' Whether it be in literature, in art, in politics, in sport, you rarely find any one who is capable of talking intelligently on any subject outside his own particular 'shop.' For the rest, men and women go to their favourite journals, and are content to take their opinions and things in general secondhand and ready-made. How often do you find a man or woman who has taken the trouble to form an original and independent opinion upon any matter which has been discussed in the columns of the Press? No sensible being cares to hear a *réchauffé* of the views expressed

in the journals of the day, and so it is that conversation has dwindled into the feeblest and smallest of small-talk. It is actually a relief to turn from such insipid gabble to those, in my thinking, hideously unsociable pastimes, chess and whist. The man who invented those pastimes must, I think, have been a cynic and a misanthrope. But we of the present day have no need to upbraid him. For with the art of conversation extinct, even chess and whist may be accepted as antidotes to *ennui*.

There are, I am told, some ladies and gentlemen who, not content with cutting a figure in fashionable society, aspire to a literary reputation as well, and to that end employ some clever hack to vamp up a novel or a book of travels, to which they append their names as the authors. It is but seldom that these jackdaws are stripped of their borrowed peacock's plumes, and held up in their own poor draggled feathers to the ridicule which they deserve. Yet I note that when a novel or a book of travels is announced as forthcoming from the pen of some considerable personage in the *beau monde*, there is a more general disposition than ever before to remark, with an air of confident ill-nature, 'I wonder who Lady So-and-so has got to write that new novel of hers' or 'I suppose young Thingumbob is doing that new book of travel for Mrs. What-d'ye-call-her.' The latest question of this sort I have heard asked is, 'Who writes the Shah's diaries for him?' For another of those curious records of the Persian monarch's impressions has just been given to the world, and it seems too much to expect of an Oriental potentate that he should be personally guilty of such unaccountable literary activity. I

cannot say that there is much trace of originality or humour in the most recent of Nasser-din-Shah's diaries. Now and then his ideas are funny from their extreme childishness; but that is the only element of fun in the dreary volume. I will give two specimens of the quality of the book.

It will be remembered that the Shah was greatly struck with the numbers of perambulators in the London parks, and he seems to have been equally struck with the prevalence of umbrellas in Paris. He remarks sententiously: 'Every person, man or woman, on leaving the house, takes an umbrella in his hand; and the umbrella has three uses: it may be used as a walking-stick, or to shelter a person from the sun or from the rain, and occasionally as a weapon to strike another's head.' I presume that every loyal Persian feels it incumbent upon him to read the diary of his Shah; consequently, when any as yet untravelled Persian comes to visit Europe he will eye, with mingled curiosity and alarm, every carrier of an umbrella—doubtful with which of the three objects stated by the Shah the article in question is being carried, and prepared to defend himself against any sudden attack upon his cranium. For the royal diarist leaves his reader in blissful uncertainty as to whether the use of the umbrella as an offensive weapon be generally wanton and unprovoked or not.

The Shah is evidently proud of his own sagacity, and tells the following little story in illustration of that feature of his character. When he was inspecting the Artillery School at Fontainebleau, the cadets of that establishment were paraded before him. 'One of the pupils,' proceeds the Shah, 'didn't

seem to me to be a European, but a Japanese. I said, "Japanese, come here !" and the officers and pupils were greatly astonished at my knowing where the youth came from. But there was a reason for my knowing him to be a Japanese, for I had been told that the number of pupils was two or three hundred, and that only one Japanese was there.' A marvellously clever guess that !

There have been many far more entertaining and interesting records of an Asiatic's impressions of European society than these diaries of the Shah. In the year 1682, for example, an ambassador from Bantam visited England, and among the observations which he jotted down for the edification of his master were the following curious and amusing ones : 'At my first going to Court one of the great men almost put me out of countenance by asking ten thousand pardons of me for only treading by accident upon my toe. They call this kind of lie a compliment ; for when they are civil to a great man they tell him untruths, for which thou wouldst order any of thy officers of state to receive a hundred blows upon his foot. I do not know how I shall negotiate anything with these people, since there is so little credit to be given to them. When I go to see the king's scribe I am generally told that he is not at home, though perhaps I saw him go into his house a moment before. Thou wouldst fancy that the whole nation are physicians, for the first question they always ask me is how I do ; I have this question put to me above a hundred times a day. Nay, they are not only thus inquisitive after my health, but wish it in a more solemn manner, with a full glass in their hands, every time I sit with them at table, though at the same time

they would persuade me to drink their liquors in such quantities as I have found by experience would make me sick. They often pretend to pray for thy health also in the same manner ; but I have more reason to expect it from the goodness of thy constitution than the sincerity of their wishes.' I shall not pretend to say that the foregoing has not been skilfully manipulated in translation, but there is trustworthy evidence for the assertion that it faithfully reproduces the sentiments, if not the exact language, of the original. And perhaps that is as much as can be said of the English translation of the Shah's diary.

One of the Siamese ambassadors who visited England a few years ago published a narrative of his travels, which was far superior in every respect to the Shah's diary. I have not the book by me, otherwise I should certainly cull some extracts as illustrations of 'ourselves as others see us.' I remember, however, his description of the Queen, and it was as follows : 'One cannot but be struck with the aspect of the august Queen of England, or fail to observe that she must be of pure descent from a race of goodly and warlike kings and rulers of the earth, in that her eyes, complexion, and, above all, her bearing are those of a beautiful and majestic White Elephant !'

No doubt this was intended as the very highest compliment ; but when the worthy ambassador compares the 'complexion' of our gracious Sovereign to that of a 'white elephant,' the compliment begins to assume a dubious aspect. Opinions, indeed, vary as to the exact colour of that sacred animal. Mr. Frank Vincent, in his *Land of the White Elephant*, speaks of it as 'a dark-cream Albino,' while

Sir John Bowring says 'it is of a coffee colour, dull brownish-yellow, or yellowish-brown;' and Mrs. Leonowens, in her amusing book, *The English Governess at the Siamese Court*, declares that it is a pale-salmon pink. If Mrs. Leonowens be right, the compliment is more apparent to our Western comprehension than it would be if either Mr. Vincent's or Sir John Bowring's description were correct.

I have noted several letters in London contemporaries of late on the subject of eccentricities in the naming of children; and I dare say the following, which have come under my own notice, will be found as amusing as any. At the little village of Buckland Newton, in Dorsetshire, there prevailed a custom some forty years ago—and for aught I know to the contrary it may prevail still—of naming all the children of a family with the same initial letter. For example, the blacksmith had all his children christened by names beginning with H. Biblical names were the favourites; and one labourer with a large family, who had chosen M as the family initial, was puzzled to meet the increasing demand upon that letter, and after ransacking the Old Testament discovered and adopted for two of his girls the names of Mahalath and Mehetabel. I knew a case at Whitchurch Canonicozum, in Dorsetshire, in which a boy was christened Mahalshalal-hashbaz, and went familiarly by the abbreviated name of 'Shalal.' In the Isle of Man I remember a servant-girl who bore the name of Azenath, the wife of the patriarch Joseph. But the most amusing eccentricity I have ever heard of was the following: The first four boys of a family were named after the four Evangelists, and on the unexpected arrival of a fifth he

was baptised the 'Acts of the Apostles.' That I know to be a fact. And there are in Canterbury now, or were six or seven years ago, two instances of young men with Christian names of 'Acts,' without the addition, however, 'of the Apostles;' and each had been so called because the names of the four Evangelists had been previously exhausted upon his brothers.

I was in Sunderland not long ago, and paid a visit to the Subscription Library there. The librarian called my attention to the portrait of the first president of the institution, a fine, portly, jovial-looking personage, in the costume of the last century, who was an eminent physician in Sunderland a hundred years ago. The name of this worthy was Dr. Joseph Brown; and this good story is told of him, which is worth retelling. The old doctor lived and died a bachelor, for the romantic reason that the lady on whom he had set his affections could not see her way to accepting his hand, and he was too constant in his love to court another. The doctor's love-story was well-known in the place; and one evening, when he was sitting over his pipe and glass of punch in the club-room of a famous old tavern there, an impudent fellow in his cups thought to annoy the doctor and raise a laugh against him by toasting his coy mistress. The doctor, however, was too good-humoured to be easily put out, and he effectually turned the laugh upon his chaffer by remarking with a chuckle, 'Yes, you may toast her; you won't anger me nor hurt her. I have been toasting her for years; but I've never made her *Brown* yet.' As good a pun of its kind, I think, as I ever heard.

JUNIUS JUNIOR.

LOVE'S ONE REFRAIN.

EYES shadowed like the water-brooks,
That flow in some dark dim retreat,
And mirror back each shade that looks
Into the deep brown depths they meet—
Such eyes have you, my love, my sweet !

Like soft and trailing things that throw
Their sweeping folds across the stream,
And shadow all its placid flow
(As thoughts that fill a dreamer's dream)—
So those fringed lashes droop and seem.

I might have made a hundred rhymes
Upon the beauty of your face ;
I might have sung the changeful chimes
On every shy and changeful grace
That is so sweet in such a place.

But brow and cheek and dimpled chin,
And that sweet serious mouth of thine
Where smiles are rarely out or in,
But only hover round the line
Of all that doth to mirth incline,

Are all as nothing when I gaze
Into the light of perfect bliss,
Which melts and moves in starry rays,
Of those diviner lights I wis
That sleep must be so loth to miss.

Were I but sleep, I had no heart
To close those curtained fringes down,
And see the lily-lids apart
From those dark orbs they brightly crown—
My peerless lady's eyes of brown.

But since I am not sleep, my dear,
I will not grudge his transient share
Of folding thee in fearless fear
Of all that dreams may sweet declare,
For in a dream I may be near.

Ay, nearer than in waking hours,
Where pain and pleasure twin-like reign ;
And you upon your path of flowers
Look calmly on each heart you gain,
And weary of Love's one refrain.

RITA.



LOVE'S ONE REFRAIN.

From the Opera.



THE VIOLIN-PLAYER.

BY BERTHA THOMAS, AUTHOR OF 'PROUD MAISIE.'

CHAPTER IV.

TRANSFORMATION.

NEVER did the red-brick houses and church-spires of Bleiburg look so pleasant in the eyes of a traveller, as to Linda and Laurence, when that city came in sight at last. Weary, dusty, and foot-sore though they were, they forgot all discomfort when within reach of the goal.

'We shall be all right now,' said Linda merrily. 'I shall present myself at the Academy, get out my letters of introduction, explain everything, and we shall only remember our misfortunes to laugh at them. In a day or two all our difficulties will be over.'

But her child-companion had turned grave and downcast. Now that sober realities were about to take the place of sweet dreams, Laurence felt vividly how forlorn was her position; and it half appalled her. How would Professor Nielsen receive Allori's *protégée*? On that her whole future depended. She had not a friend in Bleiburg, not a soul to go to for help or direction.

'Whatever happens,' said Linda consolingly, 'I shan't desert you. I've grown quite fond of you these last two days. We've shared misadventures together; and if when we get to Bleiburg I come in for better luck than most, as I expect, you shall share it too. I'll take care of that.'

Though Bleiburg had looked quite near, it was five o'clock ere they reached the outskirts. Linda

debated. 'It's too late to come bearing down upon strangers to-night,' she decided. 'Besides, I am not fit to be seen at this moment, and should make an unfavourable impression. I'm ravenously hungry too, after our dry-bread breakfast. We will go to some quiet little inn, where we shall get a cheap lodging and supper, rest, make ourselves presentable, and in the morning start fresh to settle our affairs and look up our Professors.'

But Laurence felt her own difficulties too pressing. She had arrived in Bleiburg with a single possible mainstay to seek: Professor Nielsen. Supposing he were ill or dead or away; what would become of her? The thought put her in a fever of fear and impatience. Sleep and rest were out of the question till something was settled. Linda having singled out a homely little inn in one of the back streets, went in, engaged a room, ordered supper, and proceeded at once to the rearrangement of her toilette. Laurence having declared her intention—which was to go with her letter to Nielsen at once—took up her violin-case, and without waiting for Linda's assent or dissent, marched off bravely by herself into the streets.

The strange town, strange language, strange people, made Bleiburg like a new world to the child; the world where her new life was to begin. With the few words of German she had picked up on the journey she easily found

out her way to the address on the letter. An old-fashioned gabled wooden house, the last in a street leading away from the town. An old woman with her head wrapped in a woollen shawl, and looking about as affable as a surly shepherd's dog mounting guard over his master's clothes, was loitering in the porch, scowled at Laurence as she approached, and to her timid inquiry whether Professor Nielsen were at home, returned a reply of which Laurence understood merely that it was gruff. The child then produced Allori's letter, upon which the woman signed to her to come into the porch, and went shuffling up the wooden staircase in her felt slippers.

It was pitch dark below—the ground-floor seemed to consist of a stable. Here Laurence waited for what appeared an interminable time, in all the worst agonies of suspense. At length the woman came shuffling down again, with a letter which she handed to the child, at the same time holding open the house-door, and so plainly signifying to her to be off, that Laurence could but comply, disappointed that she might not see the Professor at once. It was too late in the day perhaps, but she doubted not he had written to fix an hour to-morrow.

Ten minutes later, Linda, who was proving to herself how divinely sweet are supper and repose—though in a garret—after an exhausting journey, was astounded, when in the midst of her bread-and-cheese, to see the door flung open suddenly and Laurence walk in, her cheeks flushed, her eyes sparkling, her hands tightly clasped.

'Bless me, you little tragedy queen! Why, what on earth is the matter now?' she asked, starting back.

Laurence tried to speak, but her excitement choked her utterance.

'Haven't you seen him?' inquired Linda carelessly, reverting to the rations before her. 'Come, sit down and have supper and tell me all about it.'

'I don't want any supper,' said Laurence vehemently. 'Don't talk to me, Linda;' she put up her hand to her forehead, saying over to herself impulsively, 'It *can't* be true.'

The child's agitation seemed so frantic that Linda thought it prudent to hold her peace till the heat of it had abated, as she took for granted that soon it would. So she finished her meal leisurely and in silence; then observed that she was going to bed. Laurence meanwhile kept walking up and down the bare squalid-looking room, mute, like a wild thing in a trap. She was too excited to cry, wrought up to the last pitch of nervous tension. Linda had never seen a girl in such a state in her life.

She took no notice for a while, but at last, fearing the child would hurt herself, she began good-humouredly,

'You had really better tell me what has happened. Did you see him?'

'He won't see me,' said Laurence violently. 'He won't teach me or have anything to do with me, and all because—only because—I'm a girl.'

'What?' and Linda burst into a hearty laugh, 'because you're a girl? Well, you can't help that.'

That was not the question, however. She took the open letter Laurence held out to her. It was in Italian, and ran as follows:

'Professor Nielsen begs to say that he never, under any consideration, has taken or will take lady pupils, and this is a rule to which he can make no exception. Should Signor Allori's pupil be

willing to give up the violin, and commence some other branch of study at the Academy of Bleiburg, Professor Nielsen will do what he can to assist her in obtaining admission from the authorities.'

Now Laurence had heard before that Nielsen was a strange man, hasty and difficult to please; but never had it occurred to her as possible that she could be met by such a repulse as this.

It staggered and wounded her like a blow. The old man would not believe, would not even give her a hearing; and here she had come all the way from Italy, hoping everything from him, and arrived, helpless, eager, only to be told that her errand was useless, and the best advice Bleiburg could offer her was to go back, to contradict her whole life, throw over the past, in submission to an old man's caprice.

'You see what he says,' the child exclaimed appealingly to Linda, 'that I mustn't expect any help from him here—unless—unless I give up the violin.'

Linda listened, perfectly unmoved.

'Well, why not?' she observed coolly, after a pause. 'You're only twelve. You might begin the pianoforte. Then I'daressay you've some voice, enough for a chorus-singer. After all, the violin is rather an awkward, unusual instrument for a lady to play.'

Laurence scarcely allowed her to finish.

'Give up the violin?' she repeated vehemently, still walking to and fro. 'The only thing I have to love, the only thing that still brings my father back to me! O *père, père*,' and she broke into a passion of wild grief and tears, 'why can't you come back to your little girl? She wants

you, and I know, I *know* you want her, even now!'

Linda was confounded. She was sitting half-dressed on the bed in the unlit room, staring at Laurence and without a word to say. This paroxysm was quite unlike her own furies. Her rage sought instinctively for a victim to wreak itself on. A flower-pot broken, a door slammed afforded a touch of relief. Laurence's resentment found no outlet of the sort, there was no vindictiveness in it; but her whole frame was convulsed with agitation.

'Good gracious, you quite frighten me, you poor child! I am sorry, though, that you take it so much to heart. You'd better do like me, get to bed and go to sleep, or you'll be ill to-morrow.'

'O, it is a shame!' cried Laurence unheeding, suddenly stopping short in her walk. 'How can he send me away without even a trial? Does he think I can't work as hard as a boy, or even harder, or that I shall never play as well? O, if only I could be one, just for half an hour, to show him! Val used to say the boys he knew were idle compared to me.'

Linda gazed at her in dumb amazement. The child had come to a standstill by the window before the looking-glass. A lurid streak of light from a gas-lamp outside shone into the room, and Linda saw the little face reflected, white with excitement, in a frame of dark hair, all loose and hanging.

'The child has the spirit of a boy, that's certain,' she thought admiringly for a moment. The next she gave a loud scream of horror and dismay. 'Laurence! Holy Virgin! what is she doing? O you mad little creature!'

For Laurence had snatched up Linda's scissors—a large pair that

chanced to lie there on the table—and with her left hand grasped the sweeping plaits. The next minute she had severed them, and they lay on the floor at her feet.

'Mercy!' shrieked Linda again, shuddering, for it was just as though she had seen her snip off a finger or an ear.

'There,' said Laurence, relieved, turning quickly; running her hand through her short locks and pushing them back from her forehead.

'Shouldn't I do for a boy, now?'

'Well, you might perhaps,' stammered Linda, bewildered and carried away by this torrent of passion. 'But O! it was a dreadful pity to spoil your hair.'

'If I had a boy's dress, now,' continued Laurence, with growing animation, 'I'd go to Professor Nielsen to-morrow, and ask leave to play to him. Then, if he told me to give it up, I would.'

'There, there, child,' said Linda soothingly, fearing the little girl's distress was turning her brain; 'you don't know what you are saying. You're overstrained and overtired, and no wonder. Come to sleep now, dear, and be sure that, chance what may, I shall stand by you.'

Laurence crept in after her. But it was long before either of the girls could sleep. There was no blind to the room, and streaks of light from outside still shone upon the floor. Presently Linda began to laugh softly.

'You look so funny!' she said, 'with your cropped hair. I don't know but what you might pass for a boy, indeed. It's my belief that if you had a suit of clothes and went to the Professor, no one would know but that you were.'

Laurence sat up, meditating.

'Could I, do you think?'

'Why not?' said Linda, diverted by the idea, but a trifle dis-

concerted by the serious way in which her little friend took up everything. 'We'll think it over to-morrow, and hit on some plan or other, never fear.'

'No other will do,' persisted the child earnestly. 'Listen, Linda: to-morrow you shall get the money that is waiting for me at the bank, and buy me some boy's clothes; that can't be difficult in a big town like Bleiburg. Then I can go to Professor Nielsen, and he will hear me play.'

She recalled now how once at the Villa Rondinelli she had dressed up in a suit of Val's, for fun, and gone to Mr. Romer and he had not recognised her.

Linda laughed, which encouraged the child.

'I might be your brother, you know,' said Laurence, nestling down again.

'My little brother,' murmured Linda caressingly. 'How fond I should be of you!'

'Let me be your brother,' said Laurence; 'then I might stay with you, and no one would ever suspect—'

'O, if only you were in reality!' cried Linda suddenly. 'I could love you, I think—but Bruno!'

'Well?'

'I cannot love him, dear. He is so strange, so violent, like my father. Then his dreadful opinions. He is an Internationalist, you know; but you must tell no one, it is a secret.'

'What is an Internationalist?' asked Laurence innocently.

'O, I hardly know myself; but Bruno is always meddling with dangerous things—joining in plots and secret societies—he does nothing but get himself into trouble and frighten me. He never was kind to me,' and she pressed her soft cheek against Laurence's.

'Dear Linda,' said the child, and Linda felt the little arm

stealing round her neck, 'I *should* like to stay with you.'

'We'll see, we'll see,' murmured Linda. 'Now hush, and good-night.'

And the two went off to sleep, Linda's fair head leaning against her companion's that rested happily on her shoulder.

Professor Nielsen's apartments were popularly known among the satirical musical students at Bleiburg as 'Paradise.' Their aspect, dark, unswept, cramped, and disorderly, was as forbidding as a Neapolitan prison. Still they were apparently deemed delightful by their owner, who never left them if he could help it, nor for years had been known to set foot in the town, except to go to and fro between his domicile and the Academy over the way. The sight of him stalking along the High-street would have created almost as much consternation there, as though the colossal bronze Neptune on the fountain in the market-place, and which he resembled exactly, had come down to consort with the burghers.

He and his habits remained a mystery, and as a mystery gave rise to such wild stories of his eccentricities, that in Bleiburg he went for a kind of Croquemitaine, and mothers made use of his name to frighten their babies into good behaviour. The students who had the fearful honour of access to his den helped to keep up his ogre's reputation by the true stories they circulated of his violent temper, and which did not lose in the circulation. He was reported to have broken a dull pupil's violin over his head, to have flung an impertinent one down-stairs. Again and again had his connection with the Academy been on the verge of a rupture, but his fame as a violin-teacher stood

so high, that the authorities continued to humour him, and he to be sought out eagerly by enterprising students. No one like him, it was said, for making players, though as a player himself he had failed to get his deserts, and thrown up the sponge in disgust. The disappointment, together with certain domestic disasters, had embittered his life, and it was not without reason that he had the name of a cynic, a woman-hater, and a half-lunatic.

In truth the Professor, though a man of Spartan habits, had his pet luxury, with which he had pampered himself, till he had become its abject slave,—the indulgence of his own individuality in all things great and small. Self-worship had led to every sort of eccentric development (little whims, peculiarities, inclinations, never resisted, having grown irresistible), such as left him practically no choice but to shut himself up. To jostle about among his fellow-creatures would now have been as severe a trial for one party as for the other.

Professor Nielsen was at breakfast. Clad in dressing-gown and slippers, he sat pouring out some cold coffee that stood on the stove, when Lisbet, his housekeeper, came to notify to him that visitors were waiting in the next room. He was in no mood for visitors, and would have sent these away on the spot, only he had an inherent dislike to breaking an appointment; and these came by appointment, and punctual too.

A day or two ago he had heard from a brother professor of a new pupil, Linda Visconti, who had just joined, passing her entrance examination with flying colours. It was she who was coming this morning to bring a little boy, her brother, said to have wonderful talent on the violin, and for whom

she wished to solicit advice or instruction from Nielsen.

Now the latter was kindness itself to beginners, ever ready to help them to help themselves; but to-day he was in a bad humour, and had never felt less inclined to enact the foster-father to budding genius. He had on pessimistic spectacles, and saw everything in the light of his own cantankerousness.

How many infant prodigies had he seen effloresce into full-grown nonentities! The fable of the Ugly Duckling reversed is constantly happening in the history of the fine arts. He felt a prospective dislike to Linda Visconti's brother, and instead of going to receive the applicants, he stayed ruminating how best he could turn them over to some other professor, and get out of the affair.

Suddenly the old man—he had already kept them waiting half an hour—was roused from his brown study by musical sounds in the adjoining room, sounds of his own violin, which he had left lying out there on the table, touched by a strange hand, and playing from an *ms.* that stood open upon the desk.

He started up, electrified with indignation; then bumped down in his easy-chair again, with diabolical satisfaction on his face. Aha, now he would ring and send Lisbet to order out of the house the insolent youngster who—

But his hand on the bell-rope, his wrathful sentence, were stayed simultaneously, as something took an abrupt hold of his attention.

The *attaque* of the player in there had struck him. Nielsen's long teaching-experience had quickened his perceptions to the point when from a single phrase he could more than half foretell the general worth or worthlessness

of the whole. He listened on. Well, there was a purity of tone, a command of resources behind that door most unusual in wonder-children.

He was now attending almost eagerly. The composition was full of difficulties—passages it might puzzle an advanced student to decipher correctly off-hand.

Meantime, his face would have made a precious study for an actor. First, the tremendous frown of displeasure altered into one of fixed attention, which rapidly became significant of powerful interest and cleared the way for a beam of approval. His rugged lips, compressed at first to smother an audible explosion of rage, relaxed, not into a smile—Nielsen knew not smiles—but a contortion indicative of pleasure. His countenance had undergone a complete metamorphosis, corresponding with the march of feeling within him.

The impertinence that had infuriated him was forgiven and forgotten; the new-comer had justified his extraordinary daring by his extraordinary ability.

He would not interrupt now, but bent forwards, listening with the intense and entire application of mind peculiar to those whose energies have all been appropriated to one purpose.

As Laurence sounded the last bar of the movement, the curtain over the door opposite was lifted, and the Professor's huge figure towered on the threshold.

Linda shrank as if a jungle tiger had looked in. Till now she had been taken up with a mischievous delight at the audacity of the child, but the sight of this formidable being nearly sent her flying out of the house. His stature looked colossal in the small room, and two strides brought him across it.

He hardly saw her; his eyes were fastened on her young companion in loose boyish dress, who stood by the desk, still clasping the violin, ever a friend in need.

'How long have you learnt?' he asked brusquely.

'Always,' said Laurence simply. 'I am twelve now.'

'I am told you want to become my pupil,' he continued.

'To become your pupil,' said Laurence steadily.

'So you shall'—and he gave a curious chuckle—'for all, that is, that I can teach you.'

He proceeded to put some questions as to the method and previous studies of the new-comer. Laurence's frank fearless answers pleased him well.

'You have come from Milan with your sister,' he said, for the first time deigning to look at Linda; looking away again directly with an expression so uncomplimentary, that she felt as if a book had been thrown at her head. 'Allori taught you, I suppose?'

'Yes,' said Laurence, quaking inwardly at what might have been a critical moment. But the incident of the young-lady petitioner of a week ago had as good as faded out of the Professor's mind. Such applications were getting common now, and he had one stereotyped form of refusal, which he returned to all. Linda's name had not been mentioned in Allori's letter, which, moreover, Nielsen, seeing at once what it concerned, had never read through.

As for Laurence herself, a change, Linda remarked, seemed to have come over the child beyond that of mere shorn hair and boy's disguise. It was as if in concealing her girlish nature she had indeed put by part of herself, leaving those characteristics, and those only, to speak for her

which boys and girls alike may share. At this moment she stood before the Professor a student simply.

The delicacy of the pale thin face was relieved by a distinctive strength of outline. Above all, the perfect simplicity and quiet unconsciousness of expression and manner—enhanced by contrast with Linda's coquettish beauty, and the shade of meretriciousness in that beauty itself—suggested a comparison between these two as young types of masculine and feminine art, with a strong advantage on the side of the former.

But æsthetic subtleties were not in the Professor's line. To him the new pupil was interesting merely as a possible high-class musical machine. He felt as if he had discovered a new force, and had next to consider how to apply it.

'You have been well taught,' he said bluntly. 'Come to me to-morrow at nine.'

And he dismissed them summarily, taking no more separate notice of Linda than of her umbrella.

'My stars!' ejaculated the young lady, when they were safe and sound in the street. 'I wouldn't be you, Laurence, to have to do with such a monster as that. I haven't got over my first fright at the sight of him. He'll swallow you up alive one of these days.'

'He does look fierce,' Laurence admitted. 'But they say there's no master like him.'

'I should hope not,' said Linda devoutly; 'one of that sort is enough. He would make me so nervous that I shouldn't be able to bring out a note. What courage you must have! But I expect even you, had you *seen* the savage, would have thought twice before you dared to touch his violin.'

'I couldn't help it, Linda, as I saw it lying there; it seemed as if we had been waiting a year, and every moment I felt more certain he would refuse to see me, as he did before. Then I thought the violin was looking at me, and I saw it say, "*I can bring him. Try; it is your only chance.*" So I did as it told me.'

'Well, it was all for the best, as it turned out,' sighed Linda thankfully. 'But I thought I should have fainted when he came glowering in. I wish you joy of your master, Laurence, but I like mine best. See, there he goes!' and she bowed gracefully, as on the opposite side there went by Rudolph Erlanger, the beloved of rising songstresses and music-mad amateurs—a lithe, little, oiled, curled, dark-haired dandy, with the most amiable looks and plausible manners in the world.

'He reminds me of a nice French monkey we had at the Villa Rondinelli,' said Laurence innocently; 'it would do any kind of tricks it was taught.'

Linda laughed.

'And yours me of some big sea-monster. At the Academy they all call him old Nep, you know, after the statue in the square. But we won't quarrel over our professors. Erlanger is an angel—thinks most highly of my voice, and says I've a brilliant career before me. Don't you wish you were a singer, Laurence?'

Laurence did not know, and made no reply; but Linda chattered on merrily, chiefly to herself, as they threaded their way through the streets to the house of one Schmidt, organist, where for a week she and her quasi-brother had been domesticated.

It was all Linda's doing. She had a happy knack of seizing on a plan, starting and carrying it out in a resolute practical man-

ner, and before her energy could have time to cool. She had taken a genuine fancy to Laurence, and threw herself heart and soul into the child's wishes and welfare. The notion of disguising to obtain access to the refractory Professor was irresistible to her youthful imagination and love of adventure; and she foresaw no insuperable difficulties—none, at least, for to-morrow and the next day, beyond which it was never her habit to look.

Laurence should pass for her brother, and live with her wherever she should take her lodgings. They were utter strangers in Bleiburg, and arriving in the dusk had been seen by no one but the servant at the inn. Linda engaged to baffle the latter, a dull-witted German maid-of-all-work, and so to disguise the child that Lisbet, the Professor's dragonesse, should not know her again.

To settle her own affairs first, then to procure for Laurence the required disguise to replace the clothes pawned at Lucerne, was the work of a morning. The right lodgings were as speedily found and engaged. In the organist's house was a spare cupboard of a room next to Linda's own, which he was glad to let her have for a mere trifle extra. Her fluency and gay good-humour and address smoothed the way, and the same night had seen the two scholars established under their new roof, agreed to join purses and fortunes for as long as might be.

It was with curiosity and some trepidation that Linda, the day after their first interview with the testy Professor, awaited the child's return from the second. It was very long; at last Laurence came in with a radiant countenance.

'He says there is no need for me to join the Academy at present. He says he will take

me for the next year as his pupil for nothing. Linda, Linda, sha'n't we be happy now !'

Linda took the little violinist in her arms and kissed her.

'*Vogue la galère !*' she said gaily. 'I told you I should set everything right for you soon.'

CHAPTER V.

TWO LIVES.

THERE WAS an attic in the organist's house where the girls lodged, a little lumber-room, already over-crowded with the oddments there allowed to accumulate. Latterly these had had to make way for additions, in the shape of Laurence's music-desk and Laurence, whose practising-room it became. Safe from interruption or interrupting, in this eyrie the child was to spend the best part of two years.

One little dormer-window admitted the light and commanded a wide view over the roofs of the town, away to the surrounding broad valley, with its vine-hills, low woods, and sleepy serpentine river stealing between the meadows. Within, the most volatile student could have found nothing to distract him from his work, unless it were a rat lurking in one of the dusty corners.

It was late one afternoon, the last rays of the sinking sun shone through the open lattice, falling on a curious little figure in a loose boyish blouse perched upon one of the boxes piled about the room. Here Laurence was wont to stay practising almost without a break from morning to night, in such a state of abstraction as only two studies, music and mathematics, can produce, fiddling away to an audience of rats, who listened

spell-bound or stopped their ears as might be, during the patient iteration of scales and exercises. Often, whilst her fingers were thus mechanically occupied, her imagination, as though to make up for the monotony of her work, would run riot, now transforming the attic into a little world, and peopling it with fancy shapes ; now leading her a chase across country and continent as wild as the ride the devil's huntsman led his victim in pursuit of the fabulous princess. No treat, to the child, like such random flights. Had man's progenitors wings, of which you inherit the memory, prompting you to conceive yourself fitting, Ariel-fashion, over hill, over dale, with no impediments to check you or drag you down ?

Laurence's fantasies found no expression on the violin. Nielsen's method forbade as yet any deviation from the strictest line of study. His pupils must learn the full use of their wings before they might try how far they might carry them. But her idiosyncrasy oozed out on music-paper, to the weekly vexation of soul of Linda's harmony-master, who had charitably offered to correct the young violin-student's compositions. These attempts, though condemn them he must as erratic and unlawful, showed an originality of ideas and mastery of materials with which he, an average teacher of average scholars, was unaccustomed to have to deal.

She was following such a tone-fancy now, a bright, vaporous, musical bubble floating along—

Linda came dancing like sunshine into the room, and the bubble burst.

'Laurence, tea-time ! Do you hear ?'

Laurence looked up, with a little nervous frown, at the abrupt awakening.

'I'll tell you what,' continued Linda reprovingly, 'if it wasn't for me, my little brother, you'd very soon starve to death, simply by forgetting to eat. I left your dinner out for you down-stairs, when I went off this morning to the Academy; and coming back now, I find it untouched. You goose!'

'I forgot,' Laurence confessed, 'till so late I thought it wasn't worth while to go down, as it would be tea-time directly.'

'It won't do,' Linda affirmed, shaking her head. 'You will grow thin and die. What would become of my voice, I wonder, if I were to try and live, like you, on the notes in the sunbeam? Come now, at all events, I know you're always ready for tea.'

Their frugal meal, of weak tea and thin slices of bread-and-butter, they took in a large class-room on the floor below, where the organist taught his pupils, but of which his young tenants were allowed free use at other times. The regular habits and lengthy repasts of the Schmidt establishment being found as incompatible with Linda's Academy engagements as with Laurence's passion for study, they two had often to snatch meals at odd times, and seldom put in their appearance at the family dinner and supper. How much pleasanter to picnic, as now, in that big music-room, bare but for an organ at one end, a piano at the other, and a long table in the middle! But the high dark wainscoting gave it a warm and comfortable look, and the long curtainless windows opened on a carved wooden balcony that was picturesque.

'The Forsters have asked me to go out with them to-morrow,' said Linda, naming some Bleiburg friends of hers, 'for the day.'

'Shall you go?'

'To be sure. It is a water-party up the river, quite a grand affair. Everybody is asked. It will be delightful.'

'When shall you get home?'

'O, not before bed-time. And I'll tell you what it is, Laurence darling, if you'll be a dear good child, you'll just write my musical composition for me. There's the examination coming on, and where I shall be I dread to think. I don't seem to get on one bit.'

'You see,' she resumed after a pause, 'I really *cannot* work hard like you. It would make my head ache, and when my head aches I can't sing. After all, why should I bother myself with fugues and canons and things? My voice is getting stronger and stronger every day. Only that tiresome Erlanger will insist that I've a good deal to learn before I come out. I don't see it.'

What was her voice but a gift to procure her ease and pleasure? and was she not already qualified to sing men's money out of their pockets, not to say their heads off their shoulders? Such was the sum of Miss Visconti's professional philosophy.

'Now you aren't to go running off to the attic,' said Linda, when they had finished tea, barring the door playfully. 'If you must practise, practise here. Let us try something together; we sha'n't be disturbed. Papa Schmidt has gone to his club, mamma Schmidt is at a coffee-party, and the little Schmidts are in bed.'

And she sat down to the piano. Her voice, less powerful than she chose to imagine, was of a most enchanting quality, sweet and full in tone, though giving less promise of stay and endurance. In vain did her master impress on her the necessity of caution in its exercise, lest it should play her false by wearing out prematurely.

The idea was inconceivable to her, and the temptation to astonish herself and others by taxing it to the utmost not to be resisted.

If walls have ears, those had a treat that evening. Singing at home, as good as alone, free from the shadow of nervousness or consciousness, Linda sang her best—the public singer's best, of which the public knows nothing. Her upper notes had the exquisite purity of a chorister's treble in its prime, with more richness and strength. Laurence's violin-playing, which had already the firmness of an older hand, afforded better support to the voice than Linda's own far from faultless accompaniment, in that quaint old German *Miserere*. A few solemn words set to a florid discursive melody, yet not so incongruous a union to those who can perceive the stately plan underlying the *floriture*; arabesque mouldings on a pillar of stone.

'Laurence, gracious powers! what are you thinking of?'

For Laurence, usually firm as a rock and steady as old Time, had broken off short in a phrase, like an organ when the wind in the pipes expires.

'In the name of all that's awful, what's wrong?' repeated Linda, as she turned, aghast at the child's moonstruck look.

'I saw—I thought there was a face at the glass,' said Laurence, pointing with her bow to one of the tall windows, 'and it startled me frightfully.'

Linda shuddered.

'Now, for mercy's sake, child, don't take to having visions and things, or you'll be the death of me. I was always so terrified of ghosts.'

'It wasn't a ghost,' said Laurence contemptuously, 'not the very least like a ghost. Why, it was a man.'

'A man!' echoed Linda, not reassured; 'a robber, a house-breaker perhaps. I must speak to Schmidt. I always thought those balconies unsafe. They run, almost without a break, to the end of the street. He must have the windows fastened up immediately.'

'I don't believe it was a house-breaker,' objected Laurence; 'he looked too young for that.'

'A young man?' said Linda, in an altered tone, and with curiosity. 'Why, Laurence, what was he like?'

'I can't tell—a very young man, with a pale face and dark hair; he was staring in with the strangest gray eyes. But the moment I looked it was gone.'

Linda fell into thoughtful silence. Presently, at her suggestion, they went on with their music. But Linda from time to time kept darting furtive glances at the window, as though half in hope that she might sing the phantom back again. Nothing appeared, and at last she left the piano, saying she was tired and no longer in a singing mood.

'The Forsters are certain to be decked out within an inch of their lives,' she said to herself aloud. 'I know they asked me hoping I'd play dowdy to their finery. I've set my heart on disappointing them.'

She ran off to her room, and fetched in her one holiday dress. Who shall tell the many ingenious metamorphoses of form and colour it had undergone in a twelve-month? Linda hated needlework, but loved finery more; and millinery was the sole form of work she could stick to patiently and contentedly for hours.

She, like Laurence, had her day-dreams, to sweeten such hours of labour. They were dreams of coming years of luxurious idleness,

when she should have sung her way to fame and fortune, and look back with a laugh upon past privations and obscurity. To be clothed in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day, was, if not the summit of her ambition, all she set before her at present.

As she sat at her sewing she kept questioning Laurence about the apparition. Was it a handsome face? Was she sure it was a stranger? The child was absorbed in a musical composition-exercise, and gave such answers as did little to gratify Linda's curiosity. The subject was dropped, and by the next morning forgotten by both.

Early on the morrow, Laurence, who had already been practising two hours in the attic, was surprised by Linda appearing at the door, in bewitching holiday array. She carried a cup of coffee and a roll.

'I've brought you your breakfast,' she said, setting it down on a box, 'lest you should forget. But you sha'n't taste a bit unless you tell me I look a love, and shall make those German young women go wild with envy.'

'They're too dull and too good-natured,' said Laurence, 'or I think they would. Why, Linda, what beautiful gold earrings! They look quite new.'

She reddened slightly.

'These? O, they were a present I had the other day.'

'A present! who from?' asked Laurence.

'One of our Academy students. Young Jonas, the prize violin-pupil. You know he's a great admirer of mine.'

'And you wear them?'

'Of course. Why not? They're made to be worn, I suppose?' she laughed.

Laurence seemed to have no reason on the tip of her tongue.

'You're a child. When you're older you'll understand. Public singers are always receiving presents. It's the usual thing.'

'But you aren't a public singer.'

'But I shall be in six months.'

Why not steal a march and begin the pleasant part a little beforehand? There's no harm.' And she pulled out one earring and looked at it affectionately, but not in the least sentimentally, remarking, 'I can't bear the boy; I can't even pretend to. The most I can do for him is to wear his gifts. I'm sure he ought to feel honoured. So good-bye, my little brown mouse. Of course, whilst you're my brother, you're bound to look after me,' she concluded playfully; 'but don't, for pity's sake, be so particular as poor Bruno, or I'll disown you, I will indeed.'

Half an hour later Laurence, from the attic-window, saw the little pleasure-barge go by down the river, the deck filled with gaily-dressed ladies, and gentlemen to correspond.

The watcher beheld the panorama without envy. To Laurence social amusements were as yet but a brilliant picture-writing that conveyed no definite meaning. It was now nine o'clock, time to go to Nielsen for that morning's lesson.

On going up the porch of his house the pupil was met by startling sounds of angry voices and scuffling on the landing above. The next instant a young gentleman came flying headlong downstairs, as though his course had been forcibly accelerated,—Ixion hurled out of heaven by Jupiter. Laurence recognised Jonas, the risen star of the Academy, and another of Nielsen's scholars. He was a youth of a surprisingly impetuous temperament, hard and smooth as the bronze and silver of the medals he annually carried off.

But for once his spirits seemed conspicuously ruffled by the altercation.

'Look out for yourself,' said he to his fellow-pupil, stopping on the threshold and panting for breath. 'The old ruffian has got one of his mad fits on him, and is ready to smash whatever comes in his way, your head as likely as not. I've done with him. I gave him fair warning once before. I shall stand his insults no longer, and am going to complain to the Principal. I told him so, and that drove him wild. Seriously, I wouldn't go near him just now, if I were you.' And exit Ixion into the street, rearranging his coat-collar and cuffs that had suffered in the skirmish.

Jonas was a lad whose patronising airs exposed him specially to the detestation of his juniors. Laurence felt a perverse childish pleasure in scouting his caution to-day, and walked up-stairs unhesitatingly to confront the choleric Professor, who greeted the new-comer with the most pacific grimace his features knew how to put on.

'Come, my child, and let us begin at once,' said he, with a sigh of relief; and the lesson proceeded smoothly. His wrath against that froward pupil of his had been two years brewing, and for having vented it at length he felt better and happier than he had done for some time, like an athlete after hard exercise. He was pleased to be extraordinarily well satisfied with Laurence that morning. Nielsen never praised. 'Not altogether badly done,' was a portentous compliment coming from his lips, and beyond it he was hardly on record to have gone. So when presently, after listening awhile with a more contemplative and less censorious expression than usual, he observed musingly,

'You have worked well, very well; you have surprised me,' the effect on his pupil was that of a kind of moral thunder and lightning.

'We must be thinking of the future,' he resumed. 'Next term you enter the Academy for a year. I wish you to play at their concerts.'

Laurence changed colour, and pleaded quickly, deprecatingly, 'Not yet; may I not wait? Another term at least.'

It was not Nielsen's way to allow his pupils a will of their own; still he was rather surprised than displeased at this reluctance to be put forward, and answered hesitatingly,

'Well, I shall see; perhaps the delay will do no harm,' yielding momentarily to a modesty he approved and had found so rare; 'but mind, the time must very soon come. You will have to accustom yourself to performing in public. You are quite competent. To think that that coxcomb Jonas—'

'I met him on the stairs,' said Laurence, who, as the Professor seemed in such a wondrously humane mood, felt moved to put in a word of intercession for the culprit. 'You have not dismissed him?'

The experiment was a rash one. Nielsen rose angrily, with such harshness and sternness in his face that Laurence wondered and shrank aghast. The stories of his furious temper seemed to become suddenly credible.

'How dare you name him to me?' he said violently. 'Never do so again. The boy is a cheat, with a soul of slime. That sort would steal your heart's blood to refine their sugar. He will never be more than a mountebank at his craft, but he will get on. He aspires to become an impostor, so

clever that no one shall find him out, and so he will sneak into the shoes of his betters. I took him for his father's sake,—whom I knew,—at a time when he could play no more than my poodle. I have done my best with Jonas, and he has done his worst with me, and his worst has proved stronger than my best. It is always so.' He stopped; a settled gloom overspread his face. Confirmed cynic though he was, each additional proof of human unworthiness flung in his face could embitter him afresh, awakening old griefs, opening up a mortifying retrospect. Even his young listener guessed dimly that the sudden outburst provoked, though levelled at the ingratitude and littleness of mind of a single pupil, owed its virulence to older and darker scores. Jonas's disaffection was, indeed, but a new link forged and added to an old chain, and shaking its irons, which had entered so deeply into the old man's soul.

'Art, my boy,' resumed Nielsen slowly, 'is twofold, like Freemasonry. Open, after a fashion, to all. Be as careless, as vain, as self-seeking as you like, none the less you may enter the fraternity, amuse yourself with its trivialities, call yourself artist, shine with light borrowed from the glory of an absent divinity. When all are content with this, art must die out. Its secrets will be lost. The immortal part, its depth and significance, are mysteries preserved by another order, the initiated.' He interpreted the child's wistful gaze aright, and it provoked only a derisive pity as he said interrogatively, 'You think you would like to be one of the few?'

Laurence's silence answered him. Nielsen laughed, then became suddenly grave. He was

standing up, looking down on his little pupil; he might, indeed, have been the stern apostle of some secret religious order, warning some eager proselyte candidate for admission of the fiery ordeal through which he would first have to pass. The scene was a singular one.

'Genius is a beautiful thing,' he said, 'and a brilliant and beloved thing, a gift very sweet to possess. Is it not so?'

'It should be,' said Laurence inaudibly.

'But I tell you it is not,' he burst out fiercely; 'that genius means misery; that if you have any spiritual power or insight that marks you out from the rest of the world, it means, first, that the gods hate you. You have filched something from them, and must pay in your own human coin, that they may be even with you, and look down upon you yet. Say you have served music till you can beat Apollo at his own weapons. Well, but your health, your nerves are spoilt for ever. You envy the labourer in the fields. You will never know a day without pain, an hour without chagrin. What is harmless to others has a thousand stings for you, more sensitive than they. Next, as to the world, and how well it will love you. Say you have given it divine music, made it your debtor for ever. The world hates to be under an obligation. Your enemies will poison the public mind against you. You become an open mark for calumny and wrongs of all sorts, such as would be a fit expiation for the vilest crimes. It is the fee you pay for great gifts. This if you are great enough to *force* the world to acknowledge you. If not, it will treat you with ridicule and neglect, for ranging yourself on the side of truth when quackery is having its day. You

want to be an artist, my little friend. I want you to know what that means. I would not send a son of mine to a strange land without some notice of the sort of welcome he was likely to find there.

'Have you any friends? you will lose them. If they are ambitious they will envy you. The calumnies you will attract will alienate those you love, do what you will. The artist has no family, no love. There is no mistress, no wife so mercilessly jealous as Art. She claims you body and soul.

'And what is your reward? Say you succeed. It gives you pleasure at first. But pleasure must go on increasing, or it decays. This one soon dies. You find you cannot exist without applause and triumphs, but that you can relish them no longer. You must strain every nerve to win what can no longer make your heart beat faster. The end is always the same: you are forgotten, eclipsed, and perhaps by your inferiors; but new names, new faces, new tricks are what the public want, and will have. They can do without sterling merit. You will die in obscurity, perhaps in need, as many of the chosen have done, no longer envied, but an object of pity to the sorriest Philistine. This, boy, is an artist's life and death.'

'No more than this?'

'No more,' said Nielsen gloomily. 'It is because I love you, child, that I speak these truths to you, and bid you see if you cannot choose some happier path.'

'It is too late,' said Laurence rapidly. 'I did not choose the life—it chose me. There is no other I could live.'

'Is it so?' he muttered. 'Well,' he placed his hand on the small head, and the soured old musician

looked at the eager trusting face, thinking of the days when he too was all faith and enthusiasm in a glorious future that had so betrayed him.

'I am a fool,' he exclaimed suddenly to himself, 'to talk like this to a child, who can know nothing, understand nothing—it is impossible. There, leave me now,' he concluded, in his ordinary dry imperative tone, 'and if you like, forget what I have said.'

Laurence left the house with a heavy heart. It was not that the dark picture held up by Nielsen had left a lasting corresponding impression. The child might, as he said, be too young to grasp the truths spoken, just as he was too old to perceive what Laurence's young instincts confidently asserted, that it was not the whole truth either. But there was a cloud on the near horizon that troubled her.

Two years had slipped by rapidly, and all had gone smoothly and well. Laurence had grown accustomed to her strange part, and, leading a life as secluded as Nielsen himself, had found it so easy, as half to forget that sooner or later it must bring about a dilemma far worse than that caused by Nielsen's simple rejection of the girl-applicant two years ago. The crisis seemed to be coming all at once, and the child's heart sank at the prospect of the revelations that would have to be made to the Professor. The thunderbolts he had let fall on Jonas's head seemed light in comparison with what his favourite scholar might expect, not to say deserve.

On turning the corner of the quiet Brunnen Strasse, Laurence was suddenly accosted by a stranger.

'Hold, little fellow; a word with you, please.'

Laurence pulled up short, half defiantly; the child felt intensely shy of strangers; and shunned them persistently.

'What do you want with me?' she asked, looking her interlocutor full in the face. He had accosted her in her own language.

He was well dressed, and had an easy grace of manner that did not escape the observation of the French child.

'He's not a German,' thought Laurence. 'English, perhaps.' Yet no. The recollection of Val and his malpronunciation was still vivid, and this young man's accent was irreproachable.

'You have a sister, have you not?' he continued.

'Well?'

'This is some of her property,' said he, putting a small parcel into the child's hands, 'that I want you to give back to her.'

'What is it?' asked Laurence, puzzled.

'O, jewelry,' he said carelessly, 'which she has lost.'

'Then it can't be hers,' said the child innocently; 'she had none to lose.'

'Upon my word,' he returned, laughing, 'you're rather blunt, my little man. Perhaps you'll allow that your sister knows her own things best. If she says it belongs to some one else, then I've made a mistake, and she can return it. Now, will you do my errand?'

Laurence looked from the gift to the giver, and asked simply,

'Whose errand shall I be doing?'

'Why, what a sharp little fellow you are!' he returned, laughing good-humouredly, and just touching her chin with his hand. 'Now what's your name?'

'Laurence,' the child replied, moving away.

'Well, Laurence, I hope we

shall become better acquainted in time. O, I've heard about you; you're going to be a great violin-player one of these days, are you not? Now will you do my commission to your sister?'

'I must,' said Laurence, whose ungraciousness seemed only to amuse the young man.

He nodded friendly and was moving away, when a carriage drove by with some ladies in it. He lifted his hat. A sudden light entered Laurence's mind. It was the apparition of last night.

It was late when Linda returned from her holiday trip, in dancing spirits. Laurence related the morning adventure, which was listened to with profoundest interest. She pounced upon the parcel and opened it. There lay the prettiest little trinket—a delicate golden clasp, lyre-shaped, set with brilliants. With it came these words of dedication:

'Flowers fade too quickly. Do not refuse to keep this little token of a stranger's admiration. Let him feel, by your acceptance, that you have forgiven him for the alarm he involuntarily caused you last night. GERVASE DAMIAN.'

'Flowers fade too quickly.' A clue to a mysterious bouquet that had been sent her the other day, and which Linda, believing it to come from Master Jonas, had ruthlessly allowed to wither away on the mantelpiece. She now went up to see if any life remained in the roses. Alas, they were decaying already.

'Is the brooch yours?' asked Laurence ingenuously.

'O, it's mine, it's mine,' said Linda, laughing oddly—and hers it was indeed.

CHAPTER VI.

A QUIET FAMILY.

So sedate and homely a German town as Bleiburg had small attraction for foreigners. They were almost as out of place there as white men in New Guinea, and regarded by the natives with the same sort of half-contemptuous distance and suspicion. No wonder such visitors were scarce.

It was partly on this account that Mrs. Damian, an English widow lady, had, some six months before, come to take up her weeds and her abode in Bleiburg with her son and daughter. At the time they were in deep mourning for a not very near, nor even dear, but titled relative, and it was this which had decided her on the step. In the coming period of enforced retirement she saw a presentable excuse for a move—then, alas, urgently called for—of breaking up her establishment and reducing household expenses to a minimum, and of so doing without assigning motives of economy.

For the Damians, like other junior branches of very old families, were born to a life-long struggle to keep up the prestige of a high-sounding name, without either the broad lands or the Three per Cents of their elders to help them to do so.

The Damians had a good deal to keep up. Theirs was a pedigree of such obvious and unequivocal distinction as placed them above common family pride—the ostentation of it, at least—and Mrs. Damian, no patrician born, was the only one who habitually fell into the infirmity. This was natural. Her own kith and kin were obscure, not having even (she thanked Heaven for that) won for themselves an undesired notoriety, perhaps the only sort to which circumstances would

have permitted them to aspire, by some patent world-hair-restorer, or well-advertised pills. Never did a wife more emphatically leave father and mother to cleave to her husband. Mr. Damian had married her for love; and none could have thrown herself more unreservedly into his affairs and interests, nor, now he was dead, into those of his children.

The circle into which she had been cast by her marriage was not exactly one of saints or enthusiasts, or even of harmless, guileless folk. Contact with it had left her disposition with few amiable traits alive in it but one—her strong maternal affection. Mrs. Damian loved her offspring as a leopardess its cubs, and everything, even her worldly wisdom, was secondary and auxiliary to this passion. For the sake of her son, Gervase, she would have been ready to risk life and limb without a moment's hesitation. So also, to further his interest she would have stooped to meanness or worse, without a blush or twinge of conscience. Perhaps the struggle for existence in moral feelings is nowhere to be seen more clearly at work than among women in Vanity Fair. The compunction, the delicacy, the sincerity that would have hampered Mrs. Damian in her social campaigns had rapidly been selected out of her nature. There survived a cool active head, and plenty of experience to guide her in the service of her children, who were in fact her religion.

The objects of this idolatry were, in the second place her daughter Amy, a girl of sixteen, and in the first her son, the centre of all her hopes and cares; and this love was mixed and perhaps heightened in her by a tinge of admiring fear. He was her eldest, and she had always loved

him better than the children she had lost, or than Amy who survived. Mr. Damian had died after years of ill health, and the daughter, like him, was a delicate passive creature. But some lucky conjunction of inherited qualities had bestowed on Gervase such an organisation as most men would choose for themselves, if they had the choice. Never had a son given his mother more perfect satisfaction so far. In the first place he was handsome, or going to be, for even at three-and-twenty, the type of his face, although marked, was still immature. He had taken to the world like one born with a knowledge of his own element, and showed early a social talent, amounting to genius, a special gift for bending other persons to his will, which his mother valued first among all things; since with it you can get on without other ability, and without it, though great your ability, the world may none the less give you the go-by.

The present was a crisis in the relations between mother and son. The idea that Gervase should become virtually independent of her was one Mrs. Damian could hardly bear. Her prime aim had always been to render herself indispensable to him, and so far her superiority in age and experience, her feminine tact and finesse, had secured her the desired ascendancy. But she realised that, now Gervase was verging on manhood, if she would retain the influence which as his sole surviving parent she had so long exercised, she must be vigilant indeed, keep sleeplessly on the alert, tax herself to the utmost. She was ready.

On the evening of Linda's holiday, just recorded, the Damian family were assembled in the sitting-room of the suite of apart-

ments they occupied. The house was in the Brunnen Strasse, some twenty doors off the organist's. Gervase, at one end of the room, with a table and a reading-lamp to himself, seemed deep in his books. If his mother had come to Bleiburg to save money, he had come to learn German, modern languages being an indispensable acquirement for the quasi-political career on which he was intended shortly to enter in earnest. German, accordingly, he was studying, with a stubborn determination which, despite a natural aversion to labour, he could show in anything he had set his mind upon.

Amy, who could never read a book without falling asleep or making her eyes ache, was playing draughts with her mother. After some half-dozen games they took up their fancy-work for a change, chattering briskly like crickets all the while.

'What was in your letter this morning, Amy?' asked Mrs. Damian. 'I was so busy and worried when you were telling me about it that I scarcely heard what you said. Those German servants are a great trouble. The people here cannot speak their own language. The accent of the lower classes is something detestable.'

'It was from Di,' said Amy meekly.

'Yes, you told me it was from Di. What does she say? Is there any news?'

Amy drew the letter from her pocket obediently.

'What a good clear hand your cousin writes!' sighed Mrs. Damian. 'O Amy child, if only I were not so ashamed of yours! and as to your spelling, it would disgrace a charity-girl.'

'So it might, but not a Miss Damian,' was the unbreathed retort, that suggested itself to both mother and daughter.

Amy laughed, and began reading aloud :

"My own darling little Amy,—You don't deserve a single line, but you shall have a long letter all the same, naughty, neglectful child that you are! Confess I'm of a forgiving disposition."

'When Di says that, it means she's got something she's burning to tell and must pour into cousin Amy's sympathetic ears. So she makes a virtue of necessity, and quite right too,' mused Mrs. Damian, listening with quickened interest.

"Imagine your Di's delight! I am to be presented this season, after all. Papa and mamma have talked it over, and agreed that it's perfectly absurd to keep me cooped up in the schoolroom another year."

'There's some reason behind,' was Mrs. Damian's silent comment. 'What can it be?'

"The other night I went with them and Sir Adolphus Brereton, who is staying here, to a ball at the Tittertons'."

'Sir Adolphus Brereton? Mrs. Damian became keenly attentive as she thought, 'He's unmarried, powerfully connected; likely enough that Julia has thoughts of him for Diana.'

"I enjoyed myself immensely, immensely. You will ask about my dress. Clouds of white tulle, dear, showered with rose-leaves."

'Julia would have shown better taste in dressing her daughter at seventeen rather more simply,' put in Mrs. Damian disapprovingly aloud.

"Of all my partners I had the greatest fun with Mr. Sparkleton, who knows everybody, and is as amusing as possible. Do you

remember that clever Miss Blenkinsopp who always carried off the honours from me at our classes? How I used to hate and envy her, poor thing! I could never do so again if I tried. She was there last night—such an object, dear!—in verdant green tarletan, with stiff-looking decorations of sickly white, like a chalk drawing of a five-barred gate on a grass-green ground, Mr. Sparkleton said. Here is her picture, dancing, exactly."

'See, mamma,' said Amy, laughing at the droll water-colour caricature below.

'Yes, very funny. Di was always a clever girl,' sighed Mrs. Damian.

Too clever, she feared sometimes, when diagnosing this damsel, the daughter-in-law of her heart's desire. For Di was rich. It was not for nothing that Julia Damian had married the third son of Francombe, the Bradford ironmonger, and her relations countenanced the misalliance. Mrs. Damian, who thought it would be well not to let the Francombe fortune go out of the family, had her private plans for next winter, and was rather disconcerted to hear of Di's premature appearance in the matrimonial market.

"I danced the first quadrille with Sir Adolphus. They tell me it was a distinction, as he seldom dances at all. He has just come back from Berlin, and stays with us a few days longer. Now don't go and imagine to yourself that I'm in love with him."

'*Qui s'excuse, s'accuse*,' parenthesised Mrs. Damian.

"For fear you should, I had better tell you at once he is twice my age, and not in the least good-looking. Here is his picture."

'Not so witty or well hit off as the other,' remarked Mrs. Damian.

"'Besides being silent and shy,'" continued Amy, reading on, "you would have thought it was *his* first ball and not mine. Little Sparkleton waltzes divinely, and tells the most amusing anecdotes. But mamma says he's merely an adventurer in society. I wonder what she means. Good-bye now, dearest Amy.—Ever your loving
"DIANA."

'That's all, except the postscript.'

'Let me hear the postscript, pray,' said Mrs. Damian. 'It won't be the least important part, depend upon that.' And the obedient Amy read aloud :

"'We leave town in June. But we shall be very gay at Larksmere this summer, and have a large party (among others papa has asked that tiresome Sir Adolphus!) staying in the house. I wish you were to be there.'"

'Amy, my love, just reach me my glasses. I really cannot carry the whole of Burke's *Baronetage* in my head;' and she proceeded to refresh her memory, and read, "'Brereton, Sir Adolphus, born 183-." That makes him thirty-eight—just as I thought. First cousin to Mr. Catchpole, who is to be in the Ministry when the next change comes. That means an ambassador's post for Sir Adolphus. The very match to tempt Mrs. Francombe, and Diana is her own daughter;' the words escaped her aloud.

'O mamma,' expostulated Amy, 'I wish you wouldn't talk so of Diana! I like Di. She's a nice girl.'

Mrs. Damian nodded significantly.

'I know I should like to be Di now,' sighed Amy dolefully. 'Balls in London, *fêtes* at Larksmere. O mamma, when do you think we shall go back to England?'

'I cannot tell at present. My plans are uncertain.'

'One might as well be in a convent,' said Amy plaintively.

'My dear, if I decide to immure myself here till the winter, be sure it will be for good reasons. Besides, you and Gervase are really profiting, both of you, from this voluntary exile of ours. I wish Gervase to become a thorough German scholar, and you to get on with your singing. How did the lesson with Herr Erlanger go to-day?'

'O, pretty well. Only think, mamma, he has told me everything about the girl with the beautiful voice who lives in this street, and whom we sometimes hear practising in the evenings.'

Gervase, who hitherto had heard without taking in their chatter, here just glanced up from his books for an instant, as Amy continued :

'She is a pupil at the Academy, and studying for the stage. Erlanger teaches her, and says she ought to become a great operatic singer. Then she has a little brother or cousin, who is a sort of musical genius—quite a child, but plays the flute or violin or something most wonderfully. It was very interesting.'

Mrs. Damian was yawning already.

'She is an orphan,' pursued Amy. 'Her professional name is Linda Visconti; but her mother was an American.'

'An American!' ejaculated Gervase involuntarily.

Mrs. Damian glanced up at him with eyes not sleepy now, but sharp as two needles.

'American women have usually fine voices,' he said carelessly.

'And handsome faces,' she rejoined. 'Is she a pretty girl, Gervase?'

'O, very, very,' put in Amy enthusiastically; 'she has a lovely fresh face, just like her voice.'

'Poor girl! what a prospect for her!' said Mrs. Damian compassionately. 'An orphan—pretty—and on the stage!'

'Well, mamma, and why not?' pleaded Amy obstinately, who had liberal ideas. 'Why should not actresses be as good and nice as other people?'

'There, Amy, don't talk about what you don't understand. You'll allow that I've lived rather longer in the world than you have, and should know more of its ways. Now let us go to bed. I'm tired to death. Good-night, Gervase; and don't, my dearest boy, sit up too late over your books, I entreat you.'

Gervase promised to put them away directly, and did so the instant his mother and sister had shut the door. He then betook himself to a room, which, from its diminutive size, he called his smoking compartment, to ponder over his cigar on the perversity of events. Those few particulars respecting one in whom he felt interested, that had just come to his ears in so simple a manner, he had for some time been trying to obtain by more roundabout means.

His curiosity, excited by the beauty of Linda's voice, had prompted him last evening—his mother and sister chancing to be out of the way—to risk his neck along the balconies for a glimpse of the singer. The vision of that fair nymph-like creature, to eyes oppressed, like his, by long gazing on the lymphatic feminine types in which Bleiburg chiefly abounded, was like watersprings in the

desert. He, too, was becoming impatient of the present seclusion. For the last six months he had applied himself entirely to head-work, lived and fared like the bookworm that he was not. The rebound threatened to follow, and with some violence.

A wild idea crossed his brain. Gervase liked wild ideas. A certain *blasé* medium that had encompassed him from his cradle had told upon him, as was inevitable. To charm him, even at three-and-twenty, something racy and piquant was required.

The next moment he had resolved to put it into execution. What he meant to do could not be done openly. But somebody must know. Fortunately the trusty adjutant needed was at hand, and at this very minute waiting for him in his room.

The rule that no man is a hero to his *valet de chambre* admits of emphatic exceptions. Gervase meant to be one. In after years, he sometimes said to himself that if all the rest of the world were to look down upon him he should still be a hero to Lacy, his domestic.

Lacy was young. Gervase was of opinion that a young man had better select a valet of his own age—if he meant to keep him; since, if older, the servant would probably die before his master, and then the bother of training him would have to be begun all over again with his successor. But Lacy was of a discretion above his years. Already he admired his young master sincerely, profoundly, and in return was favoured with the full confidence of the latter. Indeed, haughtiness to their servants was a thing unknown in that family. It was Napoleon who, though distant to his officers, was always familiar with his soldiers. No need for a Da-

mian to arm himself in stiffness and reserve.

'Upon my word, Lacy,' began Gervase that night, 'I'm beginning to find this place infernally dull. I wonder at myself for having borne it so well.'

'Well, it's not quite so entertaining as London in the season, sir,' Lacy admitted oracularly, with a sigh that said more.

'And I think I have been dull for as long as can reasonably be expected of me. What should you say, Lacy, if I were to give a party?'

'The question is not, sir, what I would say,' remarked the faithful one gravely, 'but Mrs. Damian.'

'Mrs. Damian will say nothing, for she will hear nothing. Suppose, then, that I were, for a change, to get up a *fête*—say a water-party down the river; something which of course she will never know anything about.'

'Well, sir, I don't know but what *you* might do it,' quoth Lacy resignedly, with a sort of 'Allah is great' tone and air.

'I've made up my mind to it,' said Gervase calmly.

When Gervase's mind was made up Lacy knew that persuasion never paid; it was his cue to give over advising, and aid and abet in the plan with all his might.

'But it will all come out, and my young master get himself into hot water, as sure as death,' he thought. 'Well, sir,' he observed aloud, 'if I may venture to say so, I think it's a very intrepid scheme of yours.'

'And I shall require you, Lacy, to take round the notes of invitation, arrange everything with the boatmen, and get what you can that's eatable out of the horrors these German shops provide. I needn't tell you what's wanted. You've been with me to Maidenhead more than once.'

Anything so appallingly vulgar as a wink would have seemed as inadmissible to Lacy as to his master. It was the merest reflex action, the faintest convulsion of the eyelid, by which Lacy, as Gervase was looking the other way, implied that it was not the first time he had been thus commissioned.

'All the same, sir, how you're to do it, and Mrs. Damian not to know, does pass my comprehension.'

'It seems to me, Lacy, I might play any extraordinary pranks in the town that I chose, and she never be the wiser. She never goes out, and my sister takes the same walk with Bessy every day. They refuse to see any society; won't know any of the people here; just tolerate a friend or two I've picked up among the professors' families. I'd wager anything that I set the Saale on fire, and she will see the first news of it a week afterwards in the *Bleiburg Gazette*—or would if she read it, which, by the way, she never does.'

Still Lacy, for his own part, thought the proposed freak extremely wild. But he had noticed that Gervase was subject to such outbreaks now and then; and an attendant, who wished to render himself useful, indispensable to his master, must note and humour his individuality.

Fortune, that favours the brave, was preparing to play Gervase a good turn. Amy had been complaining of toothache, and not ten days later a visit to the dentist became imperative. As there was no practitioner of much repute in Bleiburg, Mrs. Damian decided to take her daughter over to the capital, a few hours by rail. They would start about noon, remain away the night, returning the following morning.

'Did I not tell you, Lacy, that I should manage it?' said Gervase triumphantly. 'Here are the notes you have to leave. You must wait for the answers. And mind you don't blunder with the addresses. Your German seems to me extremely shaky still. The date fixes itself—Wednesday. Where's the almanac?' and he read aloud, "'June 4th, birthday of George III.; St. Peter's-day; eclipse of the moon.'" Excellent!

'What a lark!' thought Lacy, brightening, as he went on his errand.

That afternoon, Linda and Laurence were alone in the music-room, Linda groaning over a blotted harmony exercise, when the servant-girl brought the latter a note, saying the messenger was waiting below.

'Mr. Gervase Damian requests the pleasure of Mademoiselle Visconti's company at a water-party on the Saale on Wednesday next, to meet Professor and Madame Erlanger and other friends. The guests will assemble at the pier at twelve o'clock.'

'Mr. Damian hopes particularly that Laurence will accompany his sister, and ventures to ask that he will be so good as to bring his violin.'

Linda's eyes glistened as she read. Then she reflected doubtfully. As a pupil of the Academy, and under supervision, she was forced to have regard to other things besides her reckless love of amusement. So she scrutinised

the hand and address, read again, 'to meet Professor and Madame Erlanger,' and decided all was correct.

'Laurence, you write for me,' she said hurriedly. 'Your hand is so much better than mine.'

'What am I to say?'

'Say that we'll go, of course.' Then as the child seemed to hesitate, she repeated emphatically, 'It's all right! I know Mr. Damian. He came in yesterday while I was having my lesson. He's one of those rich Englishmen who are always doing odd and delightful things. This is a caprice of his. There can be no harm. Where our professors go—let alone their wives—we may follow without offence. They will be there to look after us.'

'I'll say you will go,' suggested Laurence.

'Not without you. O, you must, you must. I want my little brother to chaperon me. What delicious fun! There, dear, make haste and write:

"Miss Linda Visconti and Laurence will have the greatest pleasure in joining Mr. Damian's party next Wednesday at twelve o'clock."

When Lacy delivered this note, Gervase opened it with alacrity, curious to see what sort of a hand his Venetian beauty would write.

'Not bad, upon my word,' he affirmed; 'there's character there, at all events. Too much, perhaps, but I like what there is.'

FORTUNES MADE IN BUSINESS.

XV.

HORNBY CASTLE.

It is pleasant to turn aside from the bustling pathways of commerce, the clangour of looms, the hum of spindles, and the chatter and excitement of the exchange, to the lordly retirement and repose of an historic mansion which has been able to preserve to itself the principal features of its original surroundings. Such a mansion is Hornby Castle, which for the last twenty years has been the country seat of the head for the time being of the Foster family of Queensbury, whose successful and distinguished business careers we endeavoured to sketch in our last chapter. The sentiment and instinct which impelled the Fosters to select the time-honoured walls of Hornby as their place of rustication were in accordance with the general aims and attainments of their lives. Vigour, substantiality, and endurance had characterised their efforts to establish an industrial colony at Queensbury, a region theretofore regarded as inaccessible to commercial enterprise; and the same qualities were reflected in the towers and turrets of Hornby, with the associations of centuries long gone by clinging to them, and the prospect of abiding for centuries to come. Hornby Castle had experienced many vicissitudes, it is true, in its time; still it had escaped many of the indignities which similar ancestral halls had suffered in the course of the ebbs and flows of sovereign authority; and the connection of its owners

with the stirring events of English history had not been of a nature to imperil its existence. Most castles with the same length of pedigree have by this either fallen to decay and become the sacred haunts of poets, painters, and dreamers, or have had their beauties encroached upon and put into unhealthy shadow by the building up of great towns and cities around them. A happier destiny has attended Hornby; still

‘ This castle hath a pleasant seat, the air
Nimble and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses ;’

and, as in the days of the Plantagenets and the Tudors, there yet lies open before it a grand sweep of verdant pasture-lands and beautiful woods, where stately rivers and quick-rushing mountain-streams divide the landscape into picturesque patches, and where secluded hamlets peep forth from bowers of clustering leafage; while, towering in kingly grandeur over all, stands mighty Ingleborough, its summit shielded by a cap of cloud. Here time has not assumed the rôle of the despoiler, and the march of modern progress has not been in antagonism to Nature. Neither factory chimneys nor smoky towns obtrude upon the view in this pleasant part of the valley of the Lune; the only evidence of the improving hand of the mechanical inventor is that which is afforded by the railway train as it rushes over its level track to or from the





ancient city of Lancaster, some nine miles distant.

Standing apart somewhat from the general field of historical inquiry and antiquarian research, Hornby has not of late years attracted that share of attention which is justly its due. Its restoration by Mr. Foster, however, to something like its old importance as a residential property, and the fact that new associations of an interesting character have grown up around it during the present century, entitle it more than ever to be held in memory. These considerations have prompted us to attempt to recall the leading incidents in the past history of the castle and of its successive owners, and to offer some account of its present condition and aspect, as well as to give a few side pictures of the village of Hornby and the surrounding neighbourhood, and of one or two notable residents.

The situation of Hornby is commanding and picturesque in the extreme. Dr. Whitaker was of opinion that it surpassed Windsor in variety of landscape. It is a prominent object for miles round, and, standing boldly forth from a mass of trees on a hill which rises in striking amplitude from the river Wenning, is clearly visible from the railway. There are several favourite points of view for seeing Hornby. Turner seems to have been particularly impressed by the beauty of the castle and its surroundings. He drew them from three or four different positions, and contrived to invest the venerable pile and the scene that it embraced with that tender and exquisite dreaminess which was at once the peculiarity and the marvel of his genius. The three drawings which he made of Hornby for Whitaker's *Richmondshire*, in 1820 and

1821, are considered, by Turner's biographer, as some of his finest works. The view of the 'Crook of Lune, leading to Hornby Castle,' shows a vast expanse of undulating pastures, with a silvery gleam of river winding through the landscape, and the sturdy towers of Hornby peering out from the side of a wooded hill. Another of Turner's views of Hornby is taken from Tatham Church; and the third of the Hornby series, being a view of 'Ingleborough from Hornby Castle Terrace,' is spoken of by Mr. Ruskin as unsurpassable. In days anterior to the railway era, indeed, Hornby Castle was always an object of attraction to travellers going northward by Lancaster; and scattered over our literature are to be found many interesting references to the place. Dr. Whitaker, taking in the entire scene at a glance, says, 'The noble windings of the river, the fruitful alluvial lands upon its banks, the woody and cultivated ridge which bounds it to the north-west, the striking feature of Hornby Castle in front, and, above all, the noble form of Ingleborough, certainly form an assemblage of features not united to compose any rival scenery in the kingdom.' The poet Gray halted in his travels to have a look at the castle. He says, 'I came to Hornby, a little town on the Wenning, over which a handsome bridge is now building; the castle, in a lordly situation, attracted me, so I walked up the hill to it: first presents itself a large, white, ordinary-sashed gentleman's house, and behind it rises the ancient keep, built by Edward Stanley, Lord Monteagle. He died about 1529, in King Henry VIII.'s time. It is now only a shell, the rafters are laid within it as for flooring. I went up a winding

stone staircase, in one corner to the leads, and at the angle is a stone single hexagon watch-tower, rising some feet higher, fitted up in the taste of a modern summer-house, with sash-windows in gilt frames, a stucco cupola, and on the top a vast gilt eagle, built by Mr. Charteris, the present possessor.' This was in 1765. Both the stucco cupola and the 'vast gilt eagle' are now gone, and the mansion, as well as the ancient keep, has been rendered worthy of its historic fame; the hand of the restorer having, in this case, been inspired by a desire to preserve rather than efface the old, and, in adding to, to adhere strictly to the character of the original building. Mrs. Radcliffe, the *Salvator Rosa* of British novelists, as she has been called, visited Hornby in 1795, and, with more of romantic colouring than Gray indulged in, subsequently recorded her impressions of the place. The author of the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, always at home in descriptions of ancient castles and their surroundings, speaks of the vale of Lonsdale as 'mild, delicate, and reposing, like the countenance of a Madonna.' The castle itself seemed to her 'thin' and 'toppling' as she saw it 'amongst the wood, at a considerable distance, with a dark hill rising over it.' She adds, 'What remains of the old edifice is a square gray building, with a slender watch-tower, rising in one corner like a feather in a hat, which joins the modern mansion of white stone, and gives it a singular appearance by seeming to start from the centre of its roof. In front a steep lawn descends between avenues of old wood, and the park extends along the skirts of the craggy hill that towers above.' Going back to an earlier time, we find Leland de-

scribing the castle as 'on a hill strongly buildid and well repaired;' and Camden alludes to it as 'a noble castle.'

This remarkable monument of antiquity stands not far from the little railway station of Hornby. The village has an old-world look about it, and consists of a single street or lane, bordered by neat cottages, with here and there a clump of trees breaking in upon the view. The first building of importance that the visitor comes upon in his walk towards the castle is a large new school which has been built by Mr. Foster, and seems extensive enough to accommodate the entire population, young and old. Going forward, we arrive at the Wenning, and stand upon the bridge which was in course of construction in the poet Gray's time. From this picturesque bridge of three arches the full front of the castle, with its terrace, its park, and its avenues of stately elms, planted by Lord Wemyss in the early part of the last century, stands open to the view. The river sweeps close beneath the north-east side of the castle-walls, the precipitous height which intervenes between the stream and the building at this point being covered with thick-spreading foliage; then the waters turn away from the castle, leaving ample park space in front of the edifice, and flow gently on underneath the bridge and forward till the Wenning merges itself in the more majestic Lune—'the long wand'ring Lone,' as Drayton sings, or, as the more musical Spenser calls it, 'the shallow stony Lone.' As we stand on the bridge, looking at the fine old structure 'frowning with all its battlements' down upon us, we cannot but be impressed by its imposing appearance. It is a feudal fortress with a mansion

of a more modern period added. The keep, with the picturesque eagle-tower tacked on to it, stands high above the main building, forming a broad and solid outline against the sky; and the newer buildings of occupation, as they nestle underneath the old feudal tower, present a bold and handsome frontage, prettily broken up with towers, turrets, battlements, and projecting wings and mullioned windows, making a pleasant intermingling of light and shade, beauty and diversity. The new wing on the north-east side has just been built by Mr. William Foster, who has also had the keep rendered habitable; thus providing floor upon floor of splendid rooms in place of the tumble-down spaces in which, in days gone by, the castle's beleaguered garrison were accustomed, in their last extremity, to betake themselves for safety. A broad and commanding terrace stretches in front, and below lies the heavy foliated park with its avenue of 'immemorial elms.'

Such is the aspect of the castle to-day, as presented to those who view it from the village bridge. The park is entered a little distance above, where a handsome new gateway and commodious lodge have been erected, whence the castle is approached through a sloping high-arched avenue of trees of wondrous beauty.

In point of internal attractiveness, Hornby Castle, advantaged by the good taste and ample means of its present lord, has now probably greater charms for the searcher after the beautiful than ever it had. Without entering into a minute description of the various apartments of this extensive mansion, a brief enumeration of some of their main features may not be altogether out of place.

After the entrance-hall has been passed the visitor finds himself in a spacious dining-hall, with



ENTRANCE GATEWAY.

its massive carved roof, its huge fireplace, and superbly-ornamented mantel. The emblematical roses of York and Lancaster are interwoven with the general decorative design, and a bold and substantial dado of many carvings runs round the room, and upon shields set at regular intervals are painted the coats-of-arms of the successive owners of the Hornby estate—lords of the honour or manor of Hornby, one of the most extensive and important manors in Lancashire—from 1066 downwards. To the right of the dining-hall is the

library, a lofty and handsome room, which, commanding as it does one of the most beautiful prospects in the north of England, might well serve as a happy vantage-ground for the musings of the poet or the communings of the philosopher. In the opposite wing of the castle is the Magistrates' Room, where the lords of Hornby have been accustomed to administer justice, as by law directed, or to exact those manorial privileges which had descended to them from their lordly predecessors. Reception-rooms, anterooms, and a great labyrinth of domestic offices stretch behind; and on the floor above is the principal drawing-room, wherein the bright, elegant, and costly decorations, and rich upholsterings, form a striking contrast to the more massive ornamentation of the large hall below. Boudoirs, *salons*, galleries, and far-reaching corridors, bounded by bedrooms large enough for the accommodation of giants, succeed each other in the rear and at the sides of the drawing-room; and diving down again to the ground-floor, and getting away to the back, beyond a luxuriously fitted up series of bathrooms and lavatories, of sufficient extent and diversity for a hydropathic establishment, we come upon the great frowning inner walls of the keep itself. These walls are six feet in thickness, and the name, motto, and crest of the builder, Sir Edward Stanley, the first Lord Mont-eagle, are found legibly chiselled upon them. Ascending the winding staircase, with its narrow window-slits showing through the solid masonry every now and then, and looking in at the story after story of immense rooms which have been made in the interior of the keep, we bit by bit make the entire ascent, and reach the summit of the topmost tower.

From this height the outlook is most captivating. Spreading from the rocky base of the tower we see a landscape of great extent and beauty;

'Wide plains, fair trees, and lawny slopes' present themselves to the eye in exquisite alternation. The principal portion of the Hornby estate can here be overlooked, including in the prospect the pretty village of Hornby itself, resting in the shadow of the castle; the fine expanse of wood through which the Hindburn runs, and which, on account of the romantic nature of the dells and glens and precipitous crags that are hidden there amongst the trees, is known as Little Switzerland; the pretty villages of Wray and Tatham; a vast extent of moorland melting away in the purple distance, where the lord of Hornby and his friends can enjoy some of the best shooting that is to be had in the country; while, grim and mighty, making its presence felt most obtrusively of all, stands the mountain form of Ingleborough sentinel-like away to the north.

It was probably from this point, if not from this eminence, that Drayton, in the sixteenth century, viewed the valley of the Lune. He says in his *Polyolbion* :

When Lae, the most loved child of this
delicious dale,
And Wenning, on the way present their
ethers spring;
Next them she Henburne hath, and
Roburne, which do bring
Their bounties in one bark their mistress
to prefer,
That she with greater state may come to
Lancastre.'

In all these streams there is an abundance of fish—salmon, trout, &c.; and the owners of Hornby have always regarded their rights in this respect of great value. The Hornby Castle estate altogether, under its present proprietorship, comprises over 5000 acres; and Mr. Foster, lord of the honour and

manor of Hornby, the manor of Burton in Lonsdale and the forest of Mewith, possesses shooting rights extending far beyond the Hornby Castle estate; he also has the right of presentation to the livings of Hornby and Tatham. Since Mr. Foster acquired the Hornby estate he has added to it by purchase to a considerable extent, and the domain appurtenant to the castle is at the present time much larger than when Mr. John Foster made the original purchase.

Leaving for a while our perch upon the eagle-tower, to search the records of history and romance, and on the evidence of musty deeds and ancient muniments, we will now endeavour to read the story of the past concerning this castle of Hornby.

Whitaker considers that the site of the castle was unquestionably occupied by the Romans, the finding of coins and brick pavement sufficiently proving the fact. He thinks it was probably the villa of some wealthy provincial on the line of the Roman way from the *Setantiorum Portus* to *Bremetonacæ*. He does not deem it too bold a conjecture, either, to suppose that in a position nearer the junction of the Wenning with the Lune stood the castle of Horne, the first founder of Hornby; and that that being abandoned during the devastations of the Danes, the first Norman possessor found in an insulated natural hill, on the bank of the Wenning, a site better adapted to the genius of fortification in his age. In the Domesday Survey, Hornby, Melling, and Wennington are returned as forming one manor in the West Riding of Yorkshire among the lands of the king, of whom Ulf is found to hold nine carucates or ploughlands, and Orme one carucate and

a half there. The name of Ulf is perpetuated in the district by a place known as Wolfa Crag. The barony of Hornby was undoubtedly, after the Conquest, carved out of the honour of Lancaster by its lord and granted to one of his knights, to be held of him by feudal service. The name of this first Norman lord of Hornby is involved in obscurity, but in the reign of Henry II. the estate is found to be in the possession of the family of Montbegon. Roger de Montgomery, Earl of Poitou, was the first Baron of Lancaster after the accession of the Conqueror; and it is probable either that the Montbegon family acquired a grant of Hornby and other lands directly from the Earl, or that the estate came to them through the marriage of Adam de Montbegon, *tempore* Henry II., with the daughter of Adam Fitz Swaine, son of Swaine and grandson of Ailric, who was a landholder in Yorkshire contemporary with the Earl of Poitou.

The possession by the Montbegon family of the Honour of Hornby continued without any circumstances demanding special notice until the death of Roger de Montbegon in 1225-6 (10 Hen. III.), when the castle and manor of Hornby were committed to the custody of Earl Warren. In the following year, Henry de Montbegon (also named Monegheden and Munden) being found to be his cousin and heir, Earl Warren was commanded by the King's writ to surrender to him the possession of Hornby. Shortly afterwards Henry de Monegheden, or Montbegon, conveyed the Honour of Hornby to Hubert de Burgh, a name, it will be remembered, which Shakespeare has used with powerful effect in *King John*. Hubert de Burgh was Earl of Kent, and

the grant of Hornby was made to him and his wife Margaret, and their heirs. In 1231 Hubert fell under the displeasure of the King, and his lands were forfeited; but in 1233, after the reversal of his outlawry, Hubert obtained restitution of the estate, which he continued to enjoy until his death in 1242, when the King again assumed possession, but immediately afterwards restored the property to Hubert de Burgh's widow, Margaret, Countess of Kent. The Countess appears to have held the castle and lands of Hornby until her death in the 44th Hen. III., when her son and heir, John de Burgh, found himself involved in litigation with Elena, widow of John de Lungvillers, concerning the ownership of the estate.

This litigation throws a considerable light upon the high-handed style of the Plantagenet lords. Elena de Lungvillers claimed the third part of the manors, castle, and lands of Hornby and Melling as her dower, conferred upon her, she asserted, on the day of her marriage by her husband, John de Lungvillers. It was pleaded in answer that John de Lungvillers was never possessed of the property, except by an intrusion which he made after the death of Roger de Montbegon, 'whose right the said lands were;' and that Henry de Monegheden, cousin and heir of Roger, afterwards ejected John therefrom, and held the same as his inheritance, until John 'brought an assize of disseizen' and obtained a verdict in his favour by a suborned jury, which verdict was subsequently set aside as false by a second jury, by whose verdict Henry de Monegheden had recovered possession. To this Dame Elena replied by alleging that Roger de Montbegon before his death enfeoffed her husband of

the property, and that the latter had possession thereof more than a year before Henry de Monegheden, by the power of Hubert de Burgh, ejected him; and further, she contended, that the verdict given by the first jury was truly made, but that, notwithstanding, her husband could not obtain seizin, 'owing to the power of Hubert de Burgh.'

The result of this litigation has not been discovered, but another action was subsequently brought by Dame Elena de Lungvillers's granddaughter, Margaret (wife of Geoffrey de Nevill), to recover possession of the Honour of Hornby, and she succeeded in her suit. As the grounds of this decision must have been the truth of the allegations made by Elena de Lungvillers, it is probable that her action was successful also. The alleged relationship of Geoffrey de Nevill (husband of Margaret de Lungvillers) to the family of De Burgh, derived, according to a pedigree of the seventeenth century, through a marriage of one of his ancestors with the sister of the Earl of Kent, may have led to a compromise of the dispute. This, at any rate, is evident, that Geoffrey and Margaret de Nevill were put in possession of the Honour of Hornby at the close of the reign of Henry III. The Nevills, into whose family Hornby was thus brought, were a younger branch of the Nevills of Raby, afterwards Earls of Westmoreland.

Geoffrey de Nevill died in 1285, and his widow, Margaret de Nevill, became Lady of the Honour of Hornby. She died in 1318, and was succeeded in the tenancy of Hornby by John de Nevill, her grandson. It is recorded that in 1323 two of the rebels who joined Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, in his insurrection against the King,

were taken to Hornby Castle, and there being found to be Scotchmen were allowed their liberty. John de Nevill died in 1335, and Sir Robert de Nevill followed him in the ownership of the estate. In 1351 Sir Robert leased to Henry, Duke of Lancaster, for the term of his life, the manors and castle of Hornby 'by the service of a rose.' This was in reality a mortgage transaction, and on the Duke's decease the obligation had been discharged. Another Sir Robert de Nevill, probably the son of the former Sir Robert, was in possession of Hornby early in the fourteenth century; and in 1413 the Escheator of the County Palatine of Lancaster declared that Margaret, daughter of Sir Thomas Nevill (son of the second Sir Robert) and wife of Thomas Beaufort, Earl of Dorset (afterwards Duke of Exeter), was entitled to the property. The next in succession was Margaret, wife of Sir William Harrington, the Duchess of Exeter's aunt. On the death of the Duke, who outlived his wife, the Honour of Hornby became vested in Sir William Harrington, in right of his wife, and Sir John Langton, cousin of Lady Harrington, and a deed of partition was executed between the parties in 1433, whereby Hornby fell to the Harringtons.

During the Wars of the Roses, the Harringtons of Hornby allied themselves with the Yorkists, and suffered severely in the long internecine struggle. Dr. Whitaker says, that Sir William Harrington was killed at Agincourt; but this is obviously an error. Margaret, Lady Harrington, died in 1450. Her son and successor, Sir Thomas Harrington, together with his eldest son, Sir John Harrington, received their deathblow while fighting side by side under the

banner of the White Rose at the battle of Wakefield, in 1460. Sir John left two daughters, Anne and Elizabeth, aged respectively nine and eight, his heiresses. Sir James Harrington, however, the paternal uncle of these young ladies, took forcible possession of Hornby, and claimed to be its lawful owner; but, on an appeal for protection to the Court of Chancery, Sir James, and a tool of his who had assisted him in his designs, were committed to the Fleet Prison. The wardship of the heiresses and the custody of their inheritance were granted to Thomas, Lord Stanley, who married the eldest daughter, Anne, to his third son, Sir Edward Stanley, and the youngest, Elizabeth, to his nephew, John Stanley.

In 1470 (49 Henry VI.) Hornby Castle underwent a siege. The King ordered a cannon called Mile End to be sent from Bristol to the assistance of Sir Thomas Stanley, who had orders to reduce the castle. What force held possession of the castle at that time is not recorded, but Sir Thomas Stanley's own interest in the place was probably sufficient to preserve it from destruction. It might be during one of the periods when Sir James Harrington held the castle that the siege took place. Sir James, who was greatly disliked by the Lancastrians for having been the means of discovering the hiding-place of Henry VI., proved a very thorn in the flesh to his two nieces; he was for ever harassing them by forcible entries and vexatious litigation. He alleged that Sir Thomas Harrington had before his death executed a deed which conveyed his estates to trustees for the benefit of his next heirs male; and that the eldest son, Sir John, having died without male issue, he, Sir James,

was the next heir male. This deed, it was said, had been intrusted to the custody of a trustworthy servant, who subsequently produced it. Sir James's claim was unsuccessful, but was renewed at a later date by his son John, which John, it was popularly supposed, was put to death by poison, by Sir Edward Stanley's promptings, for fear of his succeeding to the Hornby estates. There is a large amount of documentary evidence, however, existing that goes against this suspicion, although Dr. Whitaker favours the popular idea. There was much litigation and diplomatising for the next year or two; but ultimately Sir Edward Stanley, in right of his wife, Anne, and otherwise, became possessed of the entire Honour of Hornby, as well as of other lands adjacent thereto.

We have now arrived at a period when history left its special mark upon the records of Hornby. Up to this time, despite the frequent change of owners and the worry of family disputes, the old fortress had kept up its state and dignity, and the lords of Hornby and their retainers had indulged in the excitement of the chase in the woods and forests around. Many a gay cavalcade would in those days set out from the gray old castle, and, to the sound of the horn and the baying of the hounds, would sally forth in pursuit of the deer, the roe, or other favourite animals of the chase. But the day had now come for the inhabitants of this luxuriant valley to have their hearts stirred by sounds of more ominous meaning. Many a time had the men of Lunesdale been called upon to repel the Scots in their plundering raids across the border; but now, in face of the threatened incursion by James IV. of Scotland, they were summoned by their lords to go out to do

battle with the Scots in their own country. It was then, as the old ballad tells, that

'From Lancashire and Cheshire fast,
They to the lusty Stanley drew;
From Hornby whereas he in hast
Set forward with a comely crew.

What banners brave before him blazed!
The people mused where he did pass;
Poor husbandmen were much amazed,
And women wond'ring cried, "Alas!"

Young wives did weep in woful cheer,
To see their friends in harness drest;
Some rent their cloaths, some tore their
hair,
Some held their babes unto their breast.'

Sir Edward Stanley had been well schooled in arms, and had early gained the favour of the King, whose greeting when they met was, 'Ho, my soldier!' It is said of him that 'the camp was his school, and his learning the pike and sword.' His greatest enemies would not deny his valour. Stanley marched gallantly forward with his brave men; and when they came to 'Flodden's fatal field,' and all the Earl of Surrey's army were ranged in order of battle, Stanley was directed to the command of the rear portion of the English forces, and to him, more perhaps than any other single commander, that day's memorable victory was due. Scott has enshrined Stanley's deeds at Flodden in imperishable verse. Few couplets are better known than that which tells us that

'Charge, Chester, charge! On, Stanley,
on!"
Were the last words of Marmion.'

So sudden and unexpected was the onslaught which Stanley made that the Scots were at once put into great disorder. The ballad before alluded to says,

'With him did pass a mighty pow'r,
Of soldiers seemly to be seen.

Most lively lads in Lonsdale bred,
With weapons of unwieldy weight;
All such as Tatham fells had fed
Went under Stanley's streamer bright.

From Bowland billmen bold were boun,
With such as Botton-Banks did hide;
From Wharemore up to Whittington,
And all to Wenning water-side.

From Silverdale to Kent Sand aide,
Whose soil is sown with cockle-shells;
From Cartmel eke and Conny-side,
With fellows fierce from Furnace fells.

All Lancashire for the most part,
The lusty Stanley stout did lead;
A stock of striplings, strong of heart,
Brought up from babes with beef and bread.

Stanley's neighbour of Thurland Castle, Brian Tunstall, a sort of Lancastrian Bayard, whom Scott calls the 'stainless knight,' fell in the battle.

One can well imagine the fervour of the welcome which would be given to the braw Lancashire lads as they came back, flushed with victory, to their homes in and around Hornby, and what festive doings there would be at the castle when 'stout Stanley' took his place again within its ancient walls as Lord Monteagle, the title with which his sovereign readily rewarded him on his return from Flodden. The title was suggested by the fact that his ancestors had borne an eagle on their crest; and the eagle's claw and the motto,

GLAV ET GANT

E. STANLEY

appear on the north-east side of the old keep.

Tradition has busied itself considerably with Lord Monteagle's name. The generally received opinion is that the beautiful octagonal tower of Hornby Church was built by him in obedience to a vow made at Flodden; but there exists a legend which points to another cause for its erection. He filled a large space in the history of his time. 'Twice,' it is recorded, 'did he and Sir John Wallop penetrate, with only 800 men, into the very heart of France; and four times did he and Sir

Thomas Lovell save Calais—the first time by intelligence, the second by stratagem, the third by their valour and undaunted courage, and the fourth by their unwearied patience and assiduity.' We also learn that 'in the dangerous insurrection by Aske and Captain Cobler, his zeal for the prince's service and the welfare of his country caused him to outstrip his sovereign's commands by putting himself at the head of his troops without the King's commission, for which dangerous piece of loyalty he asked pardon, and received thanks.' Still, in spite of all this distinction and prosperity, the common people repeated dark insinuations against his name; for not only was he suspected of having resorted to foul means to get rid of the heir of the Harringtons, but he was supposed to hold secret and unholy communings with things of evil.* He was said to be a materialist and a free-thinker; and one night, as the legend goes, 'by the still light of a cloudless harvest moon,' two men ascended the steep path leading to the castle. A light was visible from the high watch-tower, where Lord Monteagle was accustomed to keep his nightly vigils. The men advanced over the drawbridge; and while some half-dozen hoarse-throated dogs met them with their loud bayings, they passed forward and ascended the winding staircase to the turret-chamber. There, surrounded by furnaces, alembics, crucibles, and other instruments of mystery, they saw, by the light of a dim lamp, the figure of the lord of Hornby seated before a table. One of the two men was a popular divine, known as the parson of Slaidburn; the other was Maudsley, Lord Monteagle's faithful servitor. The

* Roby's *Legends and Traditions of Lancashire*.

latter was bidden to retire; and then the baron entered into a long argument with the parson about the mysteries of existence and the far-reaching speculations concerning immortality. Lord Monteagle declared the Bible to be a forgery, and religion a mere system of priestcraft and superstition; and the parson retorted by telling the baron that he only held those views because they flattered his wishes and his fears. 'Fears! What fears?' demanded Lord Monteagle. 'The fear of facing the spirit of thy lady's cousin,' said the priest; 'his blood yet crieth from the ground!' The hero of Flodden, the legend says, turned pale, trembled, and drew his sword; but the undaunted minister heeded not the action. 'Put up thy sword,' he said; 'thou hast enow of sins to repent thee of without an old man's blood added to the number.' Lord Monteagle, chafing under the parson's words, said, after a pause, 'My cousin, John Harrington, died in his own chamber. In this house, God wot. Thou didst shrive him at his last shift, and how sayest thou he was poisoned?' The priest answered, 'I said not aught so plainly;' then, with a sudden movement, he cried, 'Behold him there!' The baron glared wildly around, and his brow became suffused with a clammy perspiration. Whether any object was actually to be seen, or whether the priest had merely resorted to a trick in order to frighten Lord Monteagle, tradition does not say; but from that time forth it was known that the baron was an altered man, and immediately afterwards arose the noble church of Hornby, with its beautiful octagon tower, which still bears upon its front the following inscription:

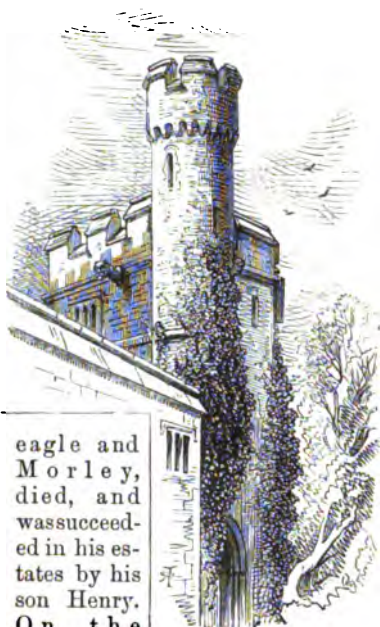
'Edwardus Stanley miles, Dns.
Monteagle me fieri fecit.'

There is little doubt, whatever may have been Sir Edward Stanley's views concerning religion at the time alluded to, he died in the full recognition of the Christian faith. This is sufficiently evidenced by his will, dated the 5th April 1523, the opening sentences of which are worth quoting on this head. 'It is necessarie,' it runs, 'and requisite for every good true Christian man to provide, foresee, and to ordain for ye life ev'lasting in heaven. I, therefore, Edward Stanley, Knt., Lord Monteagle, Knt. of the Order of the Garter, being hale and of good deliberation, and of perfect minde and memorie—laude, therefore, and praise be to Almighty God, my maker and redeemer, the good and sweet intelligence of these sentences: *Memento homo, quod cinis es, et, in cineris reverteris*, and of this, *Domine tuus . . . quia morieris*; willing while reason ruleth in my minde, and quietness in the members of my bodie, of my temporal goods somewhat to ordain for ye good of my sowle, do ordaine this my last will,' &c. He bequeathed his soul 'to Almighty God, the glorious and eternal Trinitie, to our Ladie St. Marie, moder of M'cie, St. Margarete, and to all ye saintes in heaven;' ordered his body to be buried in Hornby Chapel, which he directed his executors to complete—a trust which, unfortunately, they did not fulfil, from some cause or other; gave 'black gowns to his servants, children, and friends;' and ordered that 'xxiv white gownes be geven to xxiv poor honest men to bear torches.' 'Alsoe to ye most excellent prince and my sovereign good lord Kynge Henrie VIII., a small gold ring, with a table of a dyamond viii square sett in ye same, and cl in gold, beseeching his grace to pray for my sowle, and to bee good and

gracious, good lorde, unto my sonne and hecir.'

Lord Monteagle died at Hornby in the same year, 1523, and his son Thomas, who was only fifteen years of age at this time, succeeded him. Whitaker's statement that this second Lord Monteagle was rumoured to be the person who struck the fatal blow which killed King James IV. at Flodden must therefore be incorrect. Thomas, Lord Monteagle, held the Honour of Hornby from 1523 to 1559 (2nd Elizabeth), when he died, and his son William came into the inheritance. William, Lord Monteagle, held the Hornby estates until his death, about 1580. His daughter and only child, Elizabeth, married to Edward Parker, Lord Morley, succeeded him. The next Lord of Hornby was their son William, who acquired the estate on his father's death in 1618. William, Lord Monteagle and Morley, like his grandfather, Sir Edward Stanley, was destined to become historically famous. Camden says, 'We and our posterity must acknowledge [him] to have been born for the good of the whole kingdom. For, from an obscure letter privately sent to him, and by him most opportunely produced, the wickedest plot which the most accomplished villany could contrive was detected when the kingdom was on the eve of destruction, when certain wretches, under the cursed mask of religion, lodged a great quantity of gunpowder under the parliament-house, and waited to fire it and blow up their king and country in a moment.' It was in consequence, doubtless, of his service to the nation in discovering the Gunpowder Plot that William, Lord Monteagle, and his family were exempted from the operation of the severe laws against Roman

Catholic recusants. In 1617 King James, while on his journey from Edinburgh to London, honoured his preserver by visiting him at his castle of Hornby. Five years afterwards, William, Lord Mont-



eagle and Morley, died, and was succeeded in his estates by his son Henry. On the breaking

out of the Civil War, Henry, Lord Monteagle and Morley, allied himself with the Royalists, and Hornby Castle was on several occasions the scene of tumult and conflict. In 1625 a search for arms was made at the castle; and in 1643 Colonel Ashton and a force of Roundheads attacked and took the castle, and shortly afterwards the Commons passed an order for its being dismantled. The order was not carried out, however; and a few months later Roger Kirkby and Rigby of Burgh got a number of Furness and Cartmel men together and attempted to rescue both Hornby Castle and the neighbouring castle of Thurland. Colonel Alexander

Rigby heard of their intention, went out to meet them, and drove them back to the verge of the sea beyond Lancaster.

On the establishment of the Commonwealth, the estates of Henry, Lord Monteagle and Morley, were seized by the Parliament, and the Honour of Hornby was held on lease by one John Wildman for about a year. The attainted lord died, however, in 1655, and his son Thomas succeeded in recovering possession of his father's estates prior to the Restoration. Thomas, Lord Monteagle and Morley, after mortgaging Hornby several times, ultimately conveyed the equity of redemption, in 1663, to Robert, Earl of Cardigan, whose successor in 1713 sold the castle and its dependencies to Colonel Francis Charteris, known as 'the wicked lord,' who was condemned to death for a capital offence in the reign of George II. Colonel Charteris's estates were forfeited, but subsequently obtaining a pardon from the king, the honour, manor, and estates were regranted to him. He died in 1732, and the Honour descended to his daughter Janet, wife of the Earl of Wemyss. Lord Wemyss resided at Hornby for some considerable time; and his son, Lord Elcho, slept at the castle on his march southward with the rebel army in 1745. This circumstance was regarded with great disfavour by the Earl's neighbours; and both he and his son Francis, who succeeded him in 1756, were frequently subjected to annoyance for having favoured the rebels. For some time the castle was left untenanted; but in 1789 the then Earl Wemyss and his son, Lord Elcho, sold the castle, honour, and dependencies to Mr. John Marsden of Wennington Hall. Mr. Marsden put the

castle into complete repair, and took up his abode there in 1794. On Mr. Marsden's death childless, in 1826, Hornby Castle became once more the subject of litigation, and for ten years the lawyers pleaded and counter-pleaded respecting it, urging suit and appeal with great pertinacity. This *cause célèbre* was instituted, in the first instance, by Rear-Admiral Tatham against Mr. George Wright, who had been Mr. Marsden's agent up to the time of his death, and in whose favour partially he had made a will. After a long and costly litigation, lasting from 1826 to 1836, Admiral Tatham succeeded in establishing his claim as the heir-at-law of Mr. Marsden, whose nephew he was, and he took possession of Hornby amidst great rejoicings. In 1840 Admiral Tatham transferred the estate to Mr. Pudsey Dawson, who took down the 'sash-windowed mansion' erected by the Charteris family, and alluded to by Gray, and built in front of the ancient keep of the Monteagles the main portion of the present hall. Mr. Dawson owned the Hornby demesnes down to the year 1860, when Mr. John Foster purchased the property, and continued to reside there up to within a short period of his death.

One of the last 'great occasions' for Hornby and its castle was in January 1877, when, instead of the denizens of the pastoral valley of the Lune being summoned together to accompany the lord of Hornby to battle, as 'in the brave days of old,' they attended at the castle, of their own promptings, to tender to Mr. Foster their good wishes and congratulations on his entering upon his eightieth year. The residents on the estate had enjoyed nearly twenty years of quiet and repose under the kindly guardianship of

this captain of industry, who, when he had fought his good fight amongst the toilers and leaders in factory and mart, and won his reward of fortune, had settled down to end his days amongst the rural delights and historic associations of this ancient lordship. The bells in the fine old church-tower were set ringing, and on every side were the most profuse signs of rejoicing. There was something deeply touching in the manner in which the eloquently-worded address of the tenants was that day handed to the venerable landlord, and in the simple earnestness and gratitude of Mr. Foster's reply; and in the evening a banquet on a magnificent scale was given by the tenants, the various members of the Foster family being invited. The day altogether was one that will long be held in remembrance.

Shortly before Mr. John Foster's death, in the early part of last year, Mr. William Foster came into possession of the Hornby estates; and under his direction the castle promises to become a more imposing figure in the landscape than at any former period. When time has sufficiently subdued the newness of aspect of the additional wings and enlargements which he has made, the building and its surroundings will be well worthy of being put upon canvas by another Turner.

There still remains something to be said regarding the village itself and its notable features. The principal hostel, the Castle Inn, is of that homely type which Dickens so much admired, and is probably the place visited by Drunken Barnaby when he rested at 'Horneby, seat renowned,' as he calls it, and penned his amusing doggerel thereanent. The church, however, is the most striking feature; and its tower, so frequently

alluded to, is of such singular beauty as to cause one to regret that the rest of the edifice was not completed on the same scale. The church is dedicated to St. Margaret, and was intended 'as the domestic chapel of the lords of Hornby, as well as to become the parochial chapel for the townships of Hornby, Farleton, Roeburndale, and Wray with Botton.* Of late years some slight improvements have been made in the appearance of the church, but, with its flat roof and unrelieved spaces, it yet remains internally a somewhat ungainly-looking edifice. Three handsome stained-glass windows have been placed in the chancel, one to the memory of Lord Monteagle, one in commemoration of Mr. John Marsden, and a third contains a figure in representation of St. Margaret. There is also a tablet to the memory of Dr. Lingard, the historian, in the chancel, which memorial was erected by his 'friends and associates,' Mr. Pudsey Dawson, Mr. John Murray, and Mr. Coulston.

This is perhaps the only instance that could be cited of a Roman Catholic dignitary having a monument erected to him in modern times in a Protestant church.

Dr. Lingard lived in a pleasantly-situated house nearly opposite the church. The house stands back a little way from the road, and has a small garden in front, with protecting wall and iron railings coming up to the roadside. Adjoining the house is a little chapel, where for forty years—from 1811 to 1851—the doctor was accustomed to perform his humble ministrations. There is a large garden behind the house and chapel; and there, amongst sweet-smelling flowers and overhanging trees, the good priest was

* Baines's *History of Lancashire*.

went to sit or walk, book in hand, pursuing his studies in healthful seclusion. Mr. Murray of Hornby Hall, and other venerable residents of the village, still preserve pleasant recollections of the historian, for whom the greatest possible respect was always felt by those amongst whom he lived. The Roman Catholic mission at Hornby was founded by Anne, daughter of Thomas Benison of Hornby,

that quiet unpretentious house at Hornby that he wrote, year by year, with steady industry, but quietly and calmly, his *History of England*, a work which has long been regarded as one of the most able histories that we possess.

It is related of Dr. Lingard, by one who well remembers him, that he was an early riser, being down-stairs never later than eight o'clock. He would then take a



HORNBY CHURCH.

and wife of Mr. John Fenwick of Borrow, and it was to this place of retirement that Dr. Lingard came from Ushaw in September 1811, having declined to take the presidency of the college at Maynooth, which post he had been urged to accept by Bishop Moylan. From that time forward he had ample leisure to follow the bent of his genius; and it was in

walk in his garden, after which he went in to breakfast, and when the meal was over replied to the letters which the morning's post might have brought him. From that time to noon it was his practice to employ himself in literary work, and from noon until about three o'clock he would walk out. He was of a genial sociable nature, and both received and paid many

daily visits. One of his most intimate friends was the vicar of Hornby, Mr. Fogg; indeed, all the English Church clergy in the district were on intimate terms with him, and none of the country gentlemen who lived near, from the occupant of the castle downwards, ever thought a dinner-party complete without the doctor.

Many distinguished personages made their way to Hornby to visit Dr. Lingard. Brougham, Scarlett, Pollock, and other leading members of the Northern Circuit were in the habit of driving over from Lancaster to spend a vacant day with the historian, whenever assize business brought them to John of Gaunt's ancient city. Francis Jeffrey, so well known as the original editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, came now and then also. One time Samuel Lover visited him and painted the doctor's portrait. During his stay Lover sang his song, 'The Angel's Whisper,' to the historian, who was deeply moved. Dr. Lingard was consulted by everybody in Hornby, Catholic or Protestant, when in any difficulty, and there was little passed in the neighbourhood without his being aware of it. He was particularly fond of children, and often had a number playing around him even when engaged in writing his History. Every Christmas-day he gave a dinner to a large party of children. Their simple prattle delighted him beyond measure, and they used to follow him about and look up to him as to a grandfather. He had a dog, which he called Etna, that was a great household favourite and companion of his walks. One day he and Etna sat down on the river-bank, and on the other side of the stream the doctor saw a farmer hard at work in the field,

his hat lying on the ground a few yards away. The doctor, who dearly loved a practical joke, signalled Etna to fetch the farmer's hat; and the dog at once proceeded stealthily across the river, and soon returned with the hat in its mouth. This done, the doctor placed the hat on the end of his stick and hoisted it up, until it caught the gaze of the farmer, who was much astonished to find that his head-covering had been secretly drafted away across the stream. Etna was a very sagacious animal, and lived on perfectly amicable terms with another of Dr. Lingard's household pets, an exceedingly fine and powerful cat. The doctor's chief amusement was whist, which he played almost every evening with his friend Mr. Murray and others. He was a capital player, and in defeat or victory his good-nature always kept him at the same genial level.

Dr. Lingard, in his forty years' residence at Hornby, could not help making a marked impression upon the social life and cultivated thought of the district of Lonsdale. During the earlier portion of his time there he employed himself largely in writing for the reviews and magazines, as well as in the composition of his history, and was looked up to whenever a literary controversy was raging for an expression of opinion, which he was generally free enough in giving vent to. He was one of the first promoters of the *Lancaster Guardian*, a paper which still exists and thrives, and occasionally he would figure in its columns as a correspondent.

Cardinal Wiseman was a pupil of Dr. Lingard's, and until the doctor's death the two kept up an affectionate correspondence. Lingard himself objected to having titles and honours conferred

upon him. He had a cardinal's hat offered to him, but declined it. At one time the Duke of Norfolk, Lord Holland, and other eminent personages tried to induce the doctor to make application for a pension from the Civil List; but the historian's high-mindedness would not permit him to do the necessary canvassing. This was at a time when Dr. Lingard had suffered severe pecuniary loss from the suspension of a Lancaster bank. Subsequently, however, a donation of 300*l.* was made from the Queen's privy purse, and on receiving it he purchased a carriage; and he afterwards used to say to his friends that the Queen had given him his carriage.

His History, however, brought him a considerable sum year after year, and he died worth 25,000*l.*, which he left to his old college at Ushaw. Dr. Lingard will be a memory for all time to come for the village of Hornby; and his house, chapel, and garden, which still remain as he left them, constitute a literary shrine at which Protestant and Catholic may worship with equal reverence. The Rev. Father Fisher, who is not less esteemed than his predecessor for piety and goodness of heart, now holds the Roman Catholic living at Hornby, and resides in the house formerly occupied by the historian.

Before concluding our account of Hornby it will be necessary to mention one or two antiquarian features of interest which remain as reminders of a distinguished past. Up to the period of the dissolution of monastic establishments in England, Hornby had a priory, which was a cell of the Abbey of Croxton, in Leicestershire, and had been endowed by the liberality of Roger de Montbegon, who, as the *Testa de Nevill*

records, gave one hundred acres of land in alms to the canons of Hornby. After the dissolution, however, the site and possessions of the priory were granted to Lord Monteagle and Henry Croft, and little by little the ruins disappeared, until now there is nothing left to denote where the priory stood. The site occupied by this monastic building was a commanding situation overlooking the Lune, a short distance above its junction with the Wenning. About half a mile higher up are the remains of a fortification which once guarded the pass of the Lune. A tumulus or barrow was connected with the fortification. On another part of the Hornby estate, Camp Field, are the remains of a Roman encampment in perfect outline.

Indeed, the whole of the extensive possessions now appurtenant to Hornby Castle present features or associations of abiding interest. The castle itself—which, by the way, must not be confounded with another Hornby Castle in Yorkshire, owned by the Duke of Leeds—has a history that corresponds to all the fluctuations of English social, political, and religious life. In Norman, Plantagenet, and Tudor times, when the dependencies of Hornby were little less than eighty miles in circumference; when herds of wild-deer ranged its forests, commons, and parks; and when

‘crested chiefs and tissued dames
Assembled at the clarion's call
In this proud castle's high-arched hall,’

—the aristocracy of the time was nobly represented by the lords who there held feudal sway. But, in these later times, there has arisen a new aristocracy, the aristocracy of commerce, and that is the dignity which is to-day represented by the possessor of this ancient lordship.

AS I SAT 'A-THYNKYNGE.'

NOTHING ! Only a soft stray curl
Cut from the brow of a laughing girl—
Cut from her brow for me, you know,
Twenty summers, at least, ago!
Yet still its gloss, its fragrance, lingers,
And still it twines about my fingers,
Falling into the very curve
That time has helped it to preserve,
The curve which first it learned to seek,
Taught by the pressure of her cheek ;
And cheek and curl alike were soft—
I ought to know ; I've kissed them oft.

You smile ; but has it chanced to you
To look for love in eyes of blue ?
Or parted lips ? or sunny hair ?
And to believe you found it there ?
That was the way with me, you know,
Twenty summers, at least, ago.
She looked in my face—my love, my pearl !—
And cut me this, her favourite curl !

Only a year, and I had seen
A cheek as soft as hers had been,
And lips as sweet had met my own,
Though mine were vowed to her alone—
Vowed ; but what was a lover's oath ?
I laughed and kissed, for I loved them both.

Not your idea of love, you say ?
Well, some are never led astray ;
And some— I must have loved her, though ;
Only last night I fancied so.
Seeing her children round her knee
(That nursery where mine should be),
I looked and sighed, to think that life
Has been for me a loveless strife.
Round my cold hearth no loved ones sit,
No children's voices hallow it ;
My hopes, my youth, the years have left—
A tress of hair is all they've left.

J. F.

MIDNIGHT FOOTSTEPS.

An old Leber Story.

IN an ancient Northumberland mansion two ladies sat within easy distance of a fire, the length and depth and fierceness of which would have astonished a London householder. The elder lady—and she was very old, but as brisk as a bee—sat at a large writing-table, and turned over numerous papers by the light of the wax candles that stood near in heavy silver candlesticks. The younger lady, and she was gently approaching fifty, was busily engaged with a long roll of flannel, from which she was cutting petticoats for the poor. Any winter's evening for twenty years past the widowed Mrs. Crosby and Miss Dorothy Grimble, her niece, might have been found similarly employed, the aunt ruling her large estate with a firm hand from that writing-table, and the maiden niece organising the feminine charities of the house.

'Scandalous! That fellow Smith in trouble again, and can't pay his rent. Soon see about that, idle rascal!' muttered Mrs. Crosby.

'Only a fortnight till club-day; wonder if these petticoats will be ready for the women,' murmured Miss Dorothy anxiously.

'Send them up to the school-house; they can be made there.'

'They're making new surplices for the choir; can't do both.'

'Bah! Surplices indeed! Petticoats are much more use; and I'm sure that poor miserable Rector is as much at the mercy of those women as if he wore a petticoat himself!'

'Well, aunt Crosby,' remonstrated Miss Dorothy, 'you can't *expect* a man to know all that a woman generally looks after.'

'He ought to, if he hasn't got a woman to help him. How do I know all about what a man generally looks after?'

At this moment the door was thrown open, and the old butler announced the Rector of the parish.

Mr. Preedy was a very quiet mild-looking man, upwards of fifty. He entered nervously; for he was always uncertain, until he had been greeted, whether his powerful parishioner, Mrs. Crosby, intended to snap at him or to pat him on the back (metaphorically). He now received her gracious shake of the hand with a sort of purr of gratification.

'Don't let me disturb you; was just passing—ahem, ah!' And then the sentence died away in an almost inaudible whisper of a self-evident fact, namely, that he had 'looked in.'

'Quite right, sit down; I'm busy, but Dolly will talk to you.'

Very uneasily he approached 'Dolly,' and seated himself on one side of the large work-basket, his hands meekly folded on his knees, and his eyes resting in fond admiration on the heaps of flannel.

'Always busy, always useful,' he murmured.

Miss Dorothy's maiden hand twitched, and she cut the flannel in a wrong place.

'Excuse me,' she said, rising

in some confusion. 'I forgot to leave out some medicine for Mrs. Brown. I will return immediately.'

The door had just closed when the Rector murmured audibly,

'Admirable woman! Invaluable!'

'Eh?' said aunt Crosby, sharply turning round, and the light from the fire made her spectacles gleam as she sat with raised pen, 'did you speak?'

'No—I, ah—merely was thinking—ah—what a loss Miss Dorothy would be to you—if—ah, she was to—leave you!'

'Bless me!' responded aunt Crosby, in a tone of slight contempt, 'no need to trouble about that till she talks of going.'

'No, no; very true, madam. You have such an amusing way of putting things!' and he ventured on a little nervous laugh, from which he sobered down supernaturally next minute. 'Perhaps—ah—she might marry?'

'What is the idiot driving at?' said Mrs. Crosby to herself, irate at so many interruptions. 'Marry, did you say?' she inquired aloud. 'Well, about five-and-twenty years ago Dolly was a well-looking young woman. Still, she *might* marry now, and so might I, for the matter of that, if any one asked me! Take a look at the *Times*, Mr. Preedy; they'll bring in the tray directly;' and the pen scratched on again.

'What a *cruel* old woman!' said the Rector to himself. 'She *won't* let me speak! I'll try her again, though, see if I don't.'

And having manfully turned the *Times* inside out, he gave a preparatory cough.

'Mrs. Crosby, I have long wished—'

'Why can't he keep still?' muttered the old lady *otto voce*.

'I say I have long wished—'

and he had attained the fixed high key in which he usually intoned the service, and the sound of his own voice thus pitched gave him courage—to express the admiration I feel for your niece.'

'Well, she's an excellent creature, Mr. Preedy,' agreed aunt Crosby; and in despair at his pertinacity, she put down her pen, pinched her glasses tighter on her high nose, and turned her keen face full round to await the further remarks of her visitor.

'What a wife she would make, Mrs. Crosby!' cried the cheered Rector enthusiastically.

A glimmering of the truth lit up the old lady's mind, and she replied,

'You would be a better judge of that than me, Mr. Preedy; did you want to marry her?'

'O Mrs. Crosby, you are *too* good; *may* I hope?'

With an odd smile on her puckered old face, aunt Crosby said,

'Hadn't you better ask *her*? I'll go out as she comes in.'

And suiting the action to the word the mistress of the mansion left the room as her niece entered.

That night, about half-past twelve, two hours after every one had retired, Mrs. Crosby heard a footstep on the gravel walk below her window. She got up at once, lit her candle, and throwing on a warm but faded dressing-gown, she marched along the passage, and down-stairs to the room where reposed the butler and the plate-chest. The sound of the old man's snoring showed he was undisturbed. His mistress rapped sharply.

'Get up, Barnes; there's a man walking under my window!'

Quickly old Barnes obeyed, and then he called a young footman to assist him, and the two armed themselves with pokers, and sal-

lied forth from the bay window of the dining-room; while Mrs. Crosby, candle in hand, stood just within it. After prowling about for a few minutes, the men were about to come in, when the younger of the two spied a shadow close up to the gray wall of the house. He sprang forward, shouting,

‘I’ve got him!’

And Mrs. Crosby, in a voice worthy of Mrs. Siddons, cried from the window,

‘Bring him here!’

Then the butler lending his assistance, a struggling expostulating man was dragged into the presence of the owner of the mansion. Turning to vent her wrath upon him, she exclaimed in amazement, and Barnes cried in the same breath,

‘It’s Mr. Preedy!’

‘Let me explain—Mrs. Crosby—I entreat you!’ gasped the Rector. ‘O, send away the servants!’

‘E’ve bin h’after somethin’, then!’ said the younger man confidentially as he appeared to re-

tire, but really lingered by the door to listen.

‘Speak, sir!’ commanded aunt Crosby.

‘Well, then,’ whispered the Rector, in an agitated voice, ‘she has *promised* to be mine—and—I meant no harm, indeed, dear, *kind* Mrs. Crosby; but I just walked back to look at—the light in her window!’

There was an ominous silence, and then came a crackle of laughter like the sound of holly-leaves burning, and aunt Crosby chuckled out,

‘Go home, Mr. Preedy; go home and to bed! We old folks should think of our rheumatism before we perform as Romeos or Juliets! *Good-night* to you. I’ll bolt the window now, if you don’t mind.’

‘Look at that now,’ cried the young footman, delighted.

‘Shame on you for listening, James!’ replied Barnes, adding with a growl, ‘Waking us all up to look at Miss Dorothy’s winder. Well, I’m blessed if there is a fool like an old fool!’

M. D.

THE ETHICS OF A POSTAGE-STAMP.

I NEED hardly say that, in common with the rest of the world, I venerate the memory of Sir Rowland Hill. I must, however, confess that I think all the congratulatory talk about cheap postage requires some modification. We do not pay so much for our letters as in the last generation; but, on the other hand, we have to pay our postage a great deal oftener. Whenever in any public or private matter we come to a tabulation of expenses, we discover that the item of postage is a very considerable item. The practice of postage-cards has certainly relieved an immense amount of epistolary congestion. We are glad of the excuse to send messages instead of writing letters. Many people, who would wish courteously to acknowledge every communication, now try to give one answer that may serve a good many people at the same time. Consequently a host of candidates are frequently informed through the medium of an advertisement that a selection has been made, but that it is impossible to send this communication to each applicant. No really sensible man ever takes it as a slight that he receives no answer to a letter. The fact that there is no answer is in itself an answer. It is a common saying that silence gives consent; but epistolary silence ordinarily means the opposite—is, in fact, a mode of negation. The first ethical reflection about a postage-stamp is not to use it at all if its use can be avoided.

Now when we come to consider still further this matter of the writ-

ing of a letter, it is more serious than is thought; and, taken in the aggregate, there are few things more serious in life than letter-writing. I do not wonder that I hear people complain that postage will certainly drive them to the workhouse. Letter-writing is an appalling item in my annual expenditure. The money expense of a letter to which you put a correspondent ought to be considered by those people without conscience. The cost of a letter is at least twopence. The postage is a penny; the paper and envelope are nearly another penny; and if you take into account the time for consideration which a letter implies, the time occupied in the manual work of writing it, and the trouble of posting it, it is generally much more. I used to think that the lawyers were very exacting in demanding six-and-eightpence for a letter. But now I am of opinion that their demand is only moderate and right. I think that on an average my letters quite cost me six-and-eightpence. Some of my letters—I am presumptuous enough to think—are really worth a great deal more. But let me put the money-out-of-pocket item at twopence, from which sum I decline to abate the slightest fraction. We hear a great deal of the power of one penny. A great deal more might proportionately be said on the power of two pennies. Twopence would buy me both a morning and an evening paper; it would purchase for me the *Pall Mall Gazette* or the weekly edition of the *Times*; its purchasing

power would give me half a pint of my country's bitter, or a half-soda; it is the exact admission sum charged at the two piers at Brighton; it is a convenient tip for railway-porters and little children; it is the fee for the registration of a packet or a letter: and why should society in general charge up in hosts against me, demanding these two pennies, which is nothing to the individual separately, but as a collective demand is almost enough to make me put my affairs into liquidation?

Now there are people not over reasonable or conscientious, who certainly push this matter of cheap postage to an extreme length. They want to inquire, not within, but from without, 'about everything.' They inquire about things in general, and about nothing in particular. The Plague of Letters might almost be added to the ten plagues of Egypt. On many persons letters come like a snow-storm every morning, and just as we are beginning to be comfortable in the evening the late posts bring the business letters of the day. One reason for which one likes remote parts of the country is that you only get your letters once a day, and if you are clever you may dodge them for days together. Any man who occupies at all a conspicuous position experiences this deluge of letters. I heard of a man who devised a system of decimation in his correspondence. Having withdrawn those which seemed of a private character, he opened just one in ten of the heap, and threw the remainder into the waste-paper basket. Statesmen and editors and philanthropists and some clergymen are peculiarly liable to an irruption of letters. To a certain extent there is a delightful kind of freemasonry among persons of the same craft. Any pro-

fessional or literary man thinks himself at liberty to address inquiries for information to any of his brethren. He asks for information, and there is the implied condition that in his own turn he will always be prepared to render such. There have been many interesting friendships formed and cemented through correspondence of this kind. I believe there are cases on record in which people have married through a courtship of correspondence. But there are some persons whose unhappy privilege it is that, while they do not wish to make any inquiries themselves, they receive multitudes of inquiries from other people. They are invited, for instance, to subscribe to everything going, from pagodas to pigsties. These are the people who write about Borrioboola Gha. They are dissatisfied, and think themselves hardly used if they do not receive replies, full replies, sympathetic replies, replies by return of post. Now to such persons it may be respectfully hinted that there is a question of ethics—that is to say, of moral conduct—involved in the humble postage-stamp. This is a branch of moral philosophy which ought to be especially studied in our nineteenth century. The public conscience really requires to be educated in this respect. There is a *cacoëthes scribendi* abroad in the world which ought to be sternly repelled. Many people having written their letters ought to tear those letters into a variety of little pieces. If they don't do so themselves it will very probably be done for them. What right in the world have they to ventilate their crotchets at the expense of other people? What right have they to obtrude their unmeaning concerns—unmeaning, at least, in an immense number of instances—on

people who are overwhelmed with important interests, and whose time is as precious as gold, to whom loss of time means loss of money, fresh air, and digestion? This life of ours is terribly short, and yet the human vultures swoop down and carry away crumb after crumb of it, till the entire loaf is almost frittered away. I know kind-hearted men who are chained to their desks for hours to answer what are frequently futile and unnecessary correspondences. Each correspondent thinks that he is only a unit, and that his solitary letter will not count for anything, unthinking that these items form the combination and the mass.

I am putting the matter in a very mild and moderate way when I say that the penny postage-stamp is a matter of social ethics. Of course everything in human life has an ethical use and value. We all recognise that there is a principle in details, and that details illustrate principles. To use the language of an old Greek philosopher, there is the one in the many and the many in the one. It is the ethical principle which ought to give shape and colour even to the apparently trivial matter of the use or abuse of a postage-stamp. May I be permitted to give a little practical advice? Try and have the sympathy and insight to realise that your letter may be one of a multitudinous lot of letters. Enclose a stamp for reply. Better still, enclose a stamped and directed envelope. Best of all, if you are writing to people whose time is their money, enclose a dozen stamps for their trouble, or, for the matter of that, don't be particular to half-a-dozen dozen. This is a happy innovation which would not be highly resented. At the least, adopt the middle course of the stamped envelope. I have always found it

extremely difficult to pass over any communication where the writer has obviously wished to give as little trouble as possible. There are few men so lazy that they will not find time to scribble down an answer on the margin of the letter they receive, and put it up in the stamped and directed envelope. They will do so even if the inquiry is as silly as that which Boswell once addressed to Dr. Johnson: 'Sir, what would you do if you were shut up all alone in a tower with a baby?' And their fingers may itch to give the same answer which the immortal lexicographer addressed to his too inquisitive friend, the laconic response, 'Sir, you are an idiot.'

This saying of Johnson's reminds me of a saying which I may be excused for parenthetically inserting. One of our learned or would-be learned ladies was telling a gentleman that she had been reading through Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*. 'The only thing which puzzles me is the use of the word "Idēa," making the penultimate short, which may be good Greek, but is bad English. Pray what is the meaning of idēa?' 'Madam,' replied the gentleman, 'it is the feminine of idiot.'

Another practical matter may be mentioned in respect to postage-stamps. Do not throw away your old postage-stamps. The album of postage-stamps is now a familiar institution. Many of these are rare and curious, or exhaustive, and possess great interest and value. But never throw away any effigy of her Most Gracious Majesty, though defaced by the ruthless stamp. I always bless that gracious effigy, although in the interests of art and history I cannot help wishing that we had an authentic portrait, both on coin and letters, instead of the

stereotyped superannuated impression. I once had an idea of writing a story, which I would entitle 'A Million of Postage-Stamp.' I really have solid reasons for believing that there have been cranky people who have made the acquisition of a million of postage-stamps a condition for the accomplishment of some vital matter. A legacy may depend upon it. A marriage may depend upon it. Some old imbecile may have insisted on having the wall of his bedroom pasted with a million of postage-stamps. It is not perhaps so difficult as might be thought to bring together a million of used-up stamps. It might, under certain circumstances, even be worth while to buy a few thousand stamps to get them stamped. If you have the waste-paper of very busy offices, you will be greatly helped in the accumulation. Most people who begin such an accumulation break down after a time. A lady told me the other day that she was saving up her postage-stamps towards a million, and I calculated that it would take her two hundred and fifty years at the present rate to complete her task. If you can't complete your own collection you may make yourself helpful in the matter of helping to complete collections of luckier people. A million of postage-stamps is a possession decidedly worth the having. It would have its value in the universal market.

Finally, we may obtain another ethical use of the postage-stamp. The affixing of the stamp is in the majority of cases the last stage of the letter-writing. It is a kind of sealing, signing, and delivering. It would not be a

bad moral habit for a man to pause before affixing his postage-stamp, and to consider whether judiciously and conscientiously he had not better save his penny. When once he has dropped his letter into the letter-box he has committed one of the irrevocable acts of this life. Only with the utmost entreaties and only in rarest instances have I ever known of letters rendered back by the postmaster to the sender. As you prepare to affix your stamp, give one final thought to conscience, whether you might not alter, improve, or altogether obliterate that letter. There may be all sorts of wrong and evil connected with letter-writing; but to specialise an instance, you may have been writing an angry letter. It may be a clever caustic letter, and you feel rather inclined to regard it approvingly, considered as a literary production. But it may be a passionate and unjust letter. It may be unreasonable and untrue. You may be giving unmerited pain by sending it. You may bitterly regret the moments when your hand obeyed the immoral behest of your mind. You have heard of the physician's prescription about the cucumber: to peel it carefully, slice it tenderly, be gingerly with your vinegar and plenteous with the oil, sprinkle the pepper, brown or red, over it—and then fling the mess out of the window. So when you sit down to your letter, my dear and slightly excited friend, pile up your invectives, accumulate your adjectives, be caustic and cutting in your phrases; but just before you post it give a thought to the ethics of a postage-stamp, light your pipe with it, and save your halpence.





MY LAST CHANCE.

LONDON SOCIETY.

MARCH 1880.

TELEGRAPHY EXTRAORDINARY.

BY AN ARTILLERY OFFICER.

For a month or two I had been enjoying the very problematical pleasures of a solitary station on detachment in the Garrison Artillery. To this branch of the service belong, as a rule, most of those curious erections of granite and iron which the yachting-man surveys here and there upon the out-of-the-way spots of the coast which he passes on his cruises; and which he now and then, moved by curiosity, takes the trouble of visiting, should winds and waves be propitious, to the delight of the unfortunate occupant, who has possibly not seen a soul to speak to for days or even weeks, according to circumstances. My lot it was to be stationed in one of the most remote of all these undesirable localities, the actual position of which I need not mention further, as it will be easily recognised by all who have been there; when I say that my only connection with the mainland was by a bank of deep shingle some mile and a half long, and practically impassable by sinews of average endurance; being, in fact, the nearest approximation to that road on which the traveller can only advance by walking the other way, since he slips back two feet for every

one foot forward, that I ever met with. Under these unfavourable circumstances, it may be imagined that my spirits had sunk to rather a low ebb. It was summer fortunately, and I was sitting upon the strong pier built for landing heavy stores, with a line in my hand, fishing for whatever finny monster might take a fancy to the temptingly shell-less hermit crab I was using as a bait; but the fish seemed as lazily disposed as everything else of an animate nature in the heat, and at length I was reluctantly compelled to come to the conclusion that it was of no use trying to allure them; so I resolved to pull in my line and betake myself to a book and a railway-rug on shore.

Alas for the futility of human resolutions! No sooner had I given my fishing apparatus a tug, than I became aware of the painful fact that the strong ebb-tide had drifted my hooks against one of the massive baulks of timber which stood some twenty feet or so out in the sea, supporting the movable crane whereby heavy stores were hoisted out of the holds of the War Department barges. Under the circumstances it was in vain to think of releasing

them from the shore; so, resigning myself to circumstances, I went to hunt for a boat. There was a small duck-punt on the beach belonging to one of the coast-guards, in which I was wont to paddle about the creeks in calm weather, and I speedily ran it down to the water's edge. The oars were locked up in the boat-house; but I was too lazy to go for the key, as it was an easy task to pull oneself out by means of the pier timbers, which accordingly I proceeded to do.

The hooks had caught rather deep in the woodwork, and I was disentangling them with one hand, whilst with the other I held on to the pier, when, either by carelessness or awkwardness, I ran one of them deeply into my finger. Involuntarily I moved my other hand to disengage it, and in an instant the tide, running like a millrace just then, swept the boat and myself away. Mechanically I made a dive for the oars, but of course remembered at once that they were not there, and that if my getting back to my castle depended on myself it was a very hopeless business.

Here was a pretty predicament certainly! I lifted up my voice and shouted lustily, in hopes that some one might hear me; but there was no one in sight, and from the direction of the current I was being carried past the front of the fort, which was occupied only by guns, all the buildings being naturally set in rear of the defences. However absurd it may seem, I own that for a moment I was rather glad than otherwise that no one had answered to my call, since I had a lively sense of the ridiculous appearance I should present to any of my men, sitting in an oarless boat at the mercy of winds and waves. Moreover I thought at that season of the year

I should be safe to be picked up by some vessel or other before I had gone far.

The tide, as I had often ascertained from charts and by actual experience, ran at the rate of about six miles an hour on that part of the coast, so that I was very rapidly carried out to sea. On my involuntary voyage I saw several ships at some distance; but unfortunately my boat had been purposely built to show as little as possible above the water, and formed so inconspicuous an object that none of the vessels took any notice of me. There was nothing to wave as a signal, and I dared not stand up, as the punt was one of those proverbial craft in which, when you put a pipe in one pocket, you must put a tobacco-pouch in the other to keep the balance true.

By the time the land began to disappear in the distance, matters became very serious. If the wind or sea got up in the least it was quite certain that the boat would not live ten minutes; and even now, in the slight swell that exists on the calmest day at some distance from the shore, the motion was calculated to alarm me. Moreover the evening was drawing in; and though it was one of those days in June when the almanac so obligingly inform us there is no real night, I knew what that meant in weather at all cloudy, and how impossible it would be for any ship to see me without a light to warn her of my presence. I turned out my pockets, and produced a pipe, a tobacco-pouch, a newspaper, and last, but not least, a box of lucifer-matches. In case of emergency I could always make a blaze with the paper, at all events; and meanwhile, being rather hungry and somewhat low-spirited, a pipe would be a solace, so I filled and lighted one.

Whether from the soporific effects of the tobacco, or from mere inaction, my next proceeding was to drop fast asleep, lying full length in my boat, which was luckily water-tight. I must have slept for an hour or two, when I was awakened by a noise of rushing water, and nearly overturned the punt in my first start. It was almost dark; but a few hundred yards away I saw the lights of a steamer bearing down upon me, and from their position was most disagreeably aware that a collision was imminent.

'Spat' went one lucifer-match, then another and another. Lucifer-matches never will light when one is in a hurry. At length my paper blazed up, and at the same moment I uttered an ear-splitting yell, loud enough to be heard above the rushing of the screw. By this time the steamer was so near that I could hear a voice on deck cry 'Hard a-port!' and then, to my extreme relief, saw the red light swing round towards me. As she passed by a rope was flung, which I seized hold of just as my unlucky boat was caught by the swell and dragged down. In a few seconds more I was hauled on deck, after a succession of bumps up the side, which would have made me let go my hold of anything in existence—except that rope just then.

I found myself on the deck of a fine steam-yacht of about 250 tons, surrounded by a circle of faces, one of which, evidently belonging to the owner of the vessel, was familiar to me. My old school-fellow N. was not a man to be easily surprised; but he may well have been so that night at my apparition, from the depths of the ocean apparently. In fact afterwards he told me that, between the ghostly flare of the newspaper,

and the fearful shriek I had improvised for the occasion, he could expect nothing but an inhabitant of Pandemonium to arrive on board; at which remark I laughed heartily, with a secret reservation in my own mind that, at the time the thing occurred, I had not felt at all in a laughing humour.

However, 'all's well that ends well,' and to be on board of a fine steam-yacht, with an old friend for her owner, was a most agreeable change from the solitude of my castle, or from my compulsory voyage on the deep. I own it was with a sigh that, having refreshed my inner man with divers delicacies known to yachting-men in N.'s comfortable cabin, and having related my adventures for his edification, I demanded of him where he could put me on shore, so that I might return to the duties I had so involuntarily abandoned that afternoon.

N. pulled a long face.

'My dear B., I would do a good deal to oblige you, but I am bound for the Cape on most urgent business (I'll tell you the story afterwards), and really, unless we meet a homeward-bound ship, I fear you must come too, for I can't go back. I daresay you won't mind the voyage for a change, however; and if they make any fuss about it at the War Office, you can just report the facts of the case. We shall be at Cape Town in a month or six weeks at furthest, and we are sure to find some ship there that will take you back.'

I was only too glad of the excuse, and told him so, though my heart smote me a little when I thought of the anxiety my family would experience on my account. However, there was really nothing to be done but to submit myself to my fate, especially as it was so pleasant a one;

and, after a little more conversation with my old friend, I went to bed, very thankful to find myself there, instead of being in that great sepulchre that so securely holds what it receives until the day of judgment.

Next morning, when N. had shown me all the beauties of his yacht, and expatiated upon them to his heart's content, we took our easy-chairs and cigars under an awning near the stern, where the sun could not shine down on our unprotected heads; and there, sitting lazily listening to the plash and ripple of the water around us, N. told me his story, which, being one of the most curious, in some points, that I ever heard, I will repeat, for the benefit of my readers, as nearly as possible in his own words, only asking the aforesaid readers not to set the curious facts I am about to relate down in their own minds at once as incredible, since, strange as they are, they are nevertheless true.

I think I must begin quite at the beginning, B. (said N. to me), for it must be at least five or six years since I saw you last, and the events I am going to tell you happened within the last two. You must know, then, that I was the happy possessor of an Irish uncle, who, though he had never seen me, yet, having orthodox ideas on the subject of relationship and its claims, when he found himself dying sent for his lawyer and volume of the *Landed Gentry of Great Britain and Ireland*. Luckily for me that venerable volume had given me a place, though but an insignificant one, in its pages; so, finding I was the nearest relative he had living, my uncle caused his will to be drawn out, bequeathing his estate to me on the conditions that I should spend a certain part of each year there so long as

it remained in my possession, and adding certain rigorous remarks upon the evils of absentee landlords. Having accomplished this task, my worthy kinsman set his house in order, took to his bed, and died peacefully, first writing a letter to me, to be forwarded by his lawyer after his decease, setting forth his reasons for the unexpected bounty he was bestowing upon me.

I was lounging in my club in London when this document reached me, with an explanatory and congratulatory note from the lawyer, and you may guess how surprised and delighted I was at such a piece of good fortune. I lost no time in hurrying over to Ireland and taking possession of my newly acquired estate, which I found to consist of a fine old house and some three thousand acres of excellent land, bringing in a very sufficient income, even at the low rate at which it was let to the tenants. The steward was an active intelligent man, who soon explained to me everything I required, and I had much pleasure in retaining him in his post. After all the affairs were settled to my satisfaction, I began to look about me to see how I and my neighbours were likely to agree—an important point, since I had to spend at least two months of each year in that part of the world.

Irish miles are much more expansive than English ones, as I daresay you know; so my first proceeding was to take an Ordnance map of the country and mark out a circuit of ten miles, with my house as the centre, such being about the limit of distance for a comfortable drive or ride. I felt rather sold, however, when I found that within this circle there were apparently only two houses of any importance to be found, so that between these two all my hopes

lay. The next question was who lived there, and to find out that point I summoned the steward and interrogated him.

That functionary's answers were plain and concise: No. 1 was occupied by a widow lady, family one daughter and one son, the whereabouts of the latter being unknown. No. 2 had for its master an old clergyman, doctor of divinity, unattached and unmarried; also, so far as I could ascertain, held rather in awe by the people about him, owing to certain scientific proclivities, which, to their uneducated understandings, smacked of the diabolical; a prejudice rather intensified than lessened by the fact of his being a minister of the Protestant Church. However, this gossip did not concern me, so I cut it short.

Evidently, then, my duty was to call upon the widow and make her acquaintance. As for the D.D., I thought if he was anxious to know me he might very well call himself; but meanwhile I was not particularly anxious to meet him, knowing from experience how uninteresting people with a hobby generally make themselves. Next morning, therefore, I had my horse (a beautiful bay thoroughbred belonging to my late uncle) saddled, and rode off on my voyage of discovery.

Rockfield (as was the name of Mrs. Cunningham's house) I found to be a very prettily situated little cottage, standing near the edge of an ornamental piece of water decorated here and there with quaint artificial islands covered with luxuriant flowers and foliage. The house itself was covered from basement to roof with one rich green mass of ivy, which barely allowed room for the openings of the windows. Altogether it was one of the most tasteful scenes I had ever looked on, and I augured

well for the culture of the designers as I rode up to the door, dismounted, and rang the bell.

A fresh-looking servant-maid answered my summons, and invited me to walk in. I did so, throwing the reins of my horse to a boy who appeared from the back of the house, and was ushered into a little drawing-room, whose furniture and pictures went far to realise my ideas of perfection in taste. There was an exquisite little gem of oil-painting over the mantelpiece, representing a view of Scratchell's Bay in the Isle of Wight, with which locality I was well acquainted. I was standing admiring this when the door opened, and Mrs. Cunningham and her daughter entered.

Mrs. Cunningham was a tall slender lady with a pale refined face, which must at one time have been very beautiful, but which I own was quite lost upon me just then in the sight of the girl that followed her. I won't try to describe her to you—you would only laugh at me if I were to go into raptures over her golden hair and her blue eyes, and all the rest; so I will only say that it was the most beautiful face I had ever seen or ever wish to see, and that from that moment I understood what I had often laughed at—the possibility of what the novelists call 'love at first sight.'

Don't imagine I am going to give you a *résumé* of love-scenes and suchlike here, or to attempt to interest you in a woman you have never seen. Thank God, Ethel Cunningham has promised to be my wife, and when we are married you shall come and stay with us for a while and judge for yourself. I have only mentioned her at all because she is a necessary part of my story.

As you may imagine under the circumstances, after that first meet-

ing I spent a good deal of my time at Rockfield, and very shortly declared my wishes with regard to her daughter to Mrs. Cunningham, who made no objections, since, indeed, she had learned to like me very rapidly, as I fancy any one will do when you commence by liking them yourself. She thought it right, however, to give me a history of the family, from which I learned that her only son had caused her a painful life of anxiety, and had at last closed a long career of extravagance and prodigality by enlisting in the second battalion of the 3d Buffs, then just proceeding to the Cape, as a means of escaping his creditors. I could only sympathise with her, and tell her I believed that the army was an excellent school for teaching any young man self-denial, and that I trusted he would return home changed for the better. At the same time I could not see that it had anything to do with my engagement to her daughter; so engaged we were accordingly, and after that the time passed, as you may imagine, very pleasantly and quickly for awhile. One day, as I was looking over some accounts in my study with my steward, I was startled to see Ethel riding up the avenue with every appearance of haste. I ran out to meet her; but she would not dismount, though evidently in a great state of nervous excitement. Gradually I gathered from her that she had heard that war had been declared at the Cape against the Zulus, and that her brother's was one of the regiments ordered to the front. Now to my certain knowledge the mails from the Cape had come in only three days before, and there was certainly no mention of war in them, though much of disturbances in the country; so I could only imagine that some flying rumour with no foundation of

truth had been going about, and that Ethel had given it too ready credence. To reassure her, therefore, I asked her where she had heard the news. The reply startled me, 'From Dr. Edwards.' Now 'Edwards' was the name of the Doctor of Divinity before mentioned; so, unless he had gone suddenly mad, I could conceive no reason why he should be spreading such reports. However, whether mad or not, I felt an access of righteous anger against him; and, seeing that Ethel was very near a fit of crying, I lifted her perforce from her horse, and gave her in charge to my worthy housekeeper, telling her I would ride over and see Dr. Edwards myself and find out all about it if she would wait there till my return; and with this object in view I was speedily in the saddle.

Dr. Edwards' house was a substantially built one, with no pretensions to beauty or elegance. I gave my card to the servant at the door, telling her I wished to see her master on urgent business, and was ushered into the study, a comfortable room filled with books, chiefly, as I could see at a glance, of a scientific and medical tendency. The doctor did not keep me long waiting. He was a short wizened-looking man, with an inveterate habit of taking snuff, but no other remarkable characteristic. After the usual civilities had been interchanged I opened the subject I had come on abruptly.

'Is it the case, Dr. Edwards, that you have told Miss Cunningham that war is declared at the Cape?'

The doctor nearly let his snuff-box fall.

'Dear, dear, these women are too bad!' said he. 'She solemnly promised me early this morning that she would tell that to no one; and here it is back already.'

I confess I felt a longing to horsewhip the doctor.

'How dare you, sir, tell so deliberate a falsehood to any one? The Cape mails came in last Friday, and there was not a word of war in them. You could not possibly have heard since.'

Dr. Edwards smiled a queer smile.

"Possible" is a very bad word to use in that sense, sir. Come, Mr. N., you have accused me of telling an untruth, so I owe it to myself to show you that I am no liar. Once for all, will you believe my word that I know war is declared?

I hope I may be excused under the circumstances when I answered,

'I really cannot.'

Dr. Edwards knit his brows.

'Seeing is believing, they say,' said he quietly; 'nevertheless there is a blessing upon those who believe without seeing. However, as my word of honour is not sufficient to persuade you, come with me, and I will show you proof.'

So saying, he unlocked a small door opening out of the library, and motioned to me to enter.

I found myself in a small room lit by one little window, which threw a feeble light. From wall to wall of the room a bench had been built somewhat similar to a carpenter's, and divided into twenty-six equal compartments. Each compartment was marked with a letter of the alphabet in large type, and was divided into a number of small subdivisions, each containing—a common garden snail!

My first impulse was to make a rush for the door, to escape from the madman who I had no doubt was before me; but Dr. Edwards, probably foreseeing such a move, had locked us in and

coolly pocketed the key. He stood now enjoying my astonishment with a satirical smile.

'It was your own choice to come, remember, Mr. N. However, I am not so mad as you think. You shall read a message from the Cape for yourself. Just take a piece of paper, and note down each letter as you see a snail corresponding to it move.'

Mechanically I took the paper and pencil he offered me, whilst the doctor took in his hand a minute galvanic battery about the size of a thimble, and touched with one of its wires a snail lying in a box apart from all the others. The animal contorted itself slightly.

'That is the signal to my correspondent that I am here,' said the operator. 'Now watch.'

I watched with all my attention, and presently saw one of the snails under the letter 'C' contract himself much as his predecessor had done; then followed an 'H,' and then several other letters, which I wrote down. A pause, and then it began again. I wrote vigorously. Suddenly the whole thing came to an end, and I looked down at the paper. It read thus:

'Chelmsford enters Zululand by Natal.'

'Well, are you satisfied now?' said the doctor.

'Satisfied?' answered I. 'Are you the fiend in person, or what does it all mean?'

It was an impolite question certainly, but seemed to amuse him greatly.

'Come now, Mr. N.,' said he, laughing, 'you doubted my word, and I have a fair right to be angry; but under the circumstances of the case I will forgive you. Let us have a glass of wine, and I will tell you all about it.'

I agreed, though in a great hurry to get back; and the doctor told me a most wonderful story, which sounded like a chapter of the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, and which, but for ocular evidence, I should certainly have been very doubtful about. It appeared that he and a companion had discovered the wonderful fact that when two snails were kept in contact with one another for some time, a most extraordinary sympathy was developed between them, answering somewhat to the relation between a mesmeriser and his patient when in the mesmeric trance, and that, by a series of experiments, they had found that when one snail was excited by galvanism, the other showed sufficient traces of sympathetic excitement to be recognised. Distance being quite immaterial to the success of the experiment, and the doctor's friend having business at the Cape, he agreed to take with him a box of these sympathetic snails, and to try the effect in its practical bearings. This was the result, a most satisfactory one as regarded the experiment.

I asked Dr. Edwards why he had not published the important news he had received.

He laughed.

'My dear sir, how long do you suppose my secret would have remained one had I done so? You yourself are a living example of the results of telling it to one person under promise of silence. By the way, I hope you understand that what I have shown you must be, for obvious reasons, considered as a strictly confidential communication?'

I assented—indeed I could scarcely do otherwise; but secrecy not being one of my virtues, from that day began a series of annoyances for me. I was perpetually

on the point of letting out the startling news I had heard by pure inadvertence, and then, having to correct myself, leaving no doubt a very unpleasant impression upon my auditors. Moreover, Ethel would hear of nothing less than an excursion to the Cape in person, to buy her brother out before the actual fighting began. In vain I represented—first, that the authorities would not dispense with the services of a soldier whilst actually engaged in a campaign; and secondly, that even if they were willing to do so, no soldier worthy of the name would allow it to be done for him. At length I was obliged flatly to refuse to have anything to say to such a proceeding. This caused our first quarrel, a pretty serious one; though I had the satisfaction of knowing that it effectually prevented my bride-elect from—to put the fact in plain English—making a fool of herself.

Meanwhile months rolled on, and the war pursued its course. Dr. Edwards kept us well informed of events for a while, and saved us much anxiety during the time that Cunningham was shut up with his regiment in Fort Ekowe. But as spring wore on the messages suddenly ceased, and the next Cape mail brought a letter from the correspondent there announcing the tragic end of his snails at the hands of a new and unscientific Kaffir servant. This serio-comic end to the great experiment amused me mightily at first, till I found it was no laughing matter; for Ethel, who had hitherto been watching for news with breathless anxiety, now that it came only by months instead of days, became seriously ill from the strain upon her mind. At last in despair I volunteered to make a journey out to the Cape myself, see her brother, and bring him home if

the war was over by that time ; and last, but not least, carry out a new box of snails. So here I am in the Atlantic Ocean, with a steam-yacht hired for the year, and a cargo of crawling things below which would make a hen's mouth water to look at.

Such was the conclusion of N.'s story, and at this exceedingly lame finale I burst into a fit of laughter, which my friend looked somewhat offended at, seeing, I fancy, as well as myself the ridiculous side of the narrative, but unfortunately feeling that the point was rather against himself. However, by a few well-chosen questions I soon pacified him, and then proposed that we should take a look at the snails.

'Dr. Edwards agreed to be always on the look-out from twelve till one o'clock each day,' said N. 'Suppose we send him a message? It is just about noon now by Irish time, I think.'

I agreed ; so we went down below to a room which had formerly been a cabin, but was now fitted up identically as N. had described that in the doctor's house to me. I looked at the motley assemblage of snails with interest. Each had his own little box with green food and water separate from the others. A stock of leaves had been provided by the simple process of sowing seed in a large iron tank filled with clay, and these leaves being steeped in weak sugar-and-water the creatures seemed to relish greatly.

N. proceeded to work. He took up his pigmy battery, and applied it to the snail meant to call attention to the message. The animal contorted itself most satisfactorily, but there was no answering result. After waiting awhile N. tried some of the others, but nothing followed.

'What on earth has gone wrong with them?' said he to me in despair at last. 'There cannot be any one looking out on the other side.'

'Perhaps the hens have eaten the doctor's snails,' I suggested consolingly. 'Try again to-morrow.'

But on the morrow it was just the same—no result again, and we looked rather blank.

'I'll tell you what,' said my friend at last, 'I am not going any farther on this wild-goose chase without being certain that all is right. I mean to go straight back to Southampton, and take train from there to Holyhead, and so to Ireland. I can drop you at your fort on the way.'

So it befell that just a week after I had left my castle I was landed there again, to the great surprise, not to say delight, of the unhappy mortal who had been condemned to take my place. The Horse Guards were graciously pleased to be satisfied with my 'reasons in writing'; and very soon I had settled down again, though not without a determination to hear the end of the strange story I had so curiously become acquainted with. A week later I received the following letter :

'My dear B.,—No wonder we could not get the snails to act. Poor Dr. Edwards is dead—shot down at his own avenue gate by some cowardly villain, and of course, in the confusion that followed, his experiments had a bad chance of being looked after. Miss Cunningham and I are to be married the day after to-morrow in Dublin, at the Shelborne Hotel. Get a couple of days' leave, and come and be my best man at the wedding. We are going to start together in a day or two after for the Cape, to bring her brother

home. Great hurry ; no time for more.—Yours ever, N.'

I went to the colonel at once on the receipt of the above missive, and with difficulty obtained three days' leave ; ran over to Ireland and saw my friend married (his bride being, by the way, all and more than all he represented her in the way of beauty). Four days later I dipped the flag on the roof of my fort in salute to the steam-yacht whose side I knew so well, as she steamed gaily out to sea with an ebb-tide.

As to the greatsnail experiment, I have reason to believe that it

has since been abandoned by Dr. Edwards' friend, so I have no hesitation in mentioning it in print. Whether he found that flesh and blood were unable to contend against the many evils they were heir to, and to make head against gutta-percha-covered cables and galvanic batteries, or whether, the Kaffir having demolished his stock-in-trade, he was unable, in that remote region, to provide another, I cannot say. But should any of my readers desire to repeat the experiment, the way is open to them. Only let them beware of hens—it is my last caution !

THE VIOLIN-PLAYER.

BY BERTHA THOMAS, AUTHOR OF 'PROUD MAISIE.'

CHAPTER VII.

A FANTASY.

'It was a lucky job, and a very lucky job too, that Mrs. Damian settled to take Bessy along with her. I've done my best, but I couldn't answer but that *she* might have got wind of this business. She's a little bloodhound, she is!'

Bessy was Mrs. Damian's maid, and Lacy's rival in the household, though by no means so great a personage as he. She was his inveterate enemy also, hating him quite straightforwardly, and always on the look-out to do him an injury.

So mused the factotum as he stood on the station platform with an immovable countenance, watched the train roll away with the womenkind of the establishment, and touched his hat mechanically as they disappeared, thinking to himself: 'Now for master and me!'

Gervase also, like the dutiful son that he was, had come to see the travellers off. When the train was out of sight he turned round to Lacy, who retouched his hat with a shade more spirit, saying,

'It is all right, sir; the boat is waiting, the luncheon packed and on board. By the time you get down to the landing you will find everything ready for starting.'

Gervase nodded, and set off at once for the rendezvous, reaching it in time to receive the first arrivals.

His German studies had brought him into relations with several

of the resident families—simple easy-going folk, with whom he was immensely popular. A very slight acquaintance usually sufficed to put him on a friendly footing with most people. Some invariable universally-sympathetic quality pervading his address made this human being welcome to every one. The father-professors and their student-sons admired him, and felt his friendship a certain social privilege. To their wives he was simply an ideal hero lost or strayed out of the pages of a novel, and they availed themselves of the privilege their discretion of years allowed them of making no secret of their opinion. Their daughters sighed and kept silence.

The guests, about a dozen in number, were quickly assembled. Linda was the last to arrive. Her floating pale-green dress, blonde curls, and China-rose complexion made a ravishing little colour-piece, as at length she was seen approaching in the distance with Laurence.

'That's right,' said Gervase, as they shook hands; 'so you have made your brother bring his violin, as I wished.'

He had even sent Lacy to offer to take it down to the boat. But that was a possession Laurence would never consent to entrust to strange hands.

And now the little toy steam-barge, gaily 'got up' for the occasion, streamers flying, waltzes playing (Gervase had engaged three local musicians to enliven

them on board), glided down the river, to the cheers of a group of urchins on the bank.

'Where are you going to take us to, Mr. Damian?' asked Linda, who stood by his side, watching the receding shore. 'I, for one, have no idea.'

'Won't you leave it to me?' he said. 'I like people best to have absolute confidence in me and ask no questions.'

She laughed and glanced up archly into his face. His look, though pleasant, was so penetrating, that it silenced the arch repartee on her lips.

'I am going to take you to what they call the Nixie's Stone. You know the spot, of course. There's an island, I'm told, and a haunted rock with legends hanging about it, and on shore hazel woods and banks of flowers; altogether a capital place to lunch in.'

'It was an adorable idea of yours,' said Linda gaily.

'It should be,' he said, speaking low and smiling, 'since it was yourself who inspired it.'

The next moment he was doing the conventional-polite to Frau Professorinn Erlanger, leaving Linda unusually flurried. What was the talisman that enabled him to disarm the coquette in her, laying her as defenceless as the veriest *ingénue* ever victimised?

All the party were on friendly and familiar terms. Talk and laughter flowed apace. Only one kept aloof—Laurence, stationed at the prow of the boat, with face averted and mind far away from the jolly crew, but happiest of all perhaps in the keenest possible enjoyment of this rare delightful outing. It was simply delicious to stand there, without having to talk, staring at the banks and trees and rushes as they swept by. A world of sweet and deli-

cate frolics and gleeful fancies danced and careered about in that young head, whilst the broad pleasantries echoed from the deck fell on those ears unheeded.

'There's Laurence at his reveries as usual,' remarked Erlanger to Linda. 'Are you not afraid of his falling into the river? He looks like a boy who might walk in his sleep.'

'O, Laurence is wide awake enough,' replied Linda. 'He has plenty of sense too, twice as much as myself,' and she laughed.

Now Gervase had eyes for everybody, and the strange, pale, quiet-looking boy was not the member of his party who had attracted the smallest share of his attention.

'You are very silent; I hope you are enjoying your holiday a little too,' he said presently, coming up close behind the slender figure at the prow.

Gervase's voice was in itself a heavenly gift, deep-toned, full, and without a flaw. It thrilled Laurence, pretty much as his look had thrilled Linda.

'You are so industrious, I hear,' he pursued. 'Your sister tells me you scarcely allow yourself a day's rest once in six months. You deserve to become a great player.'

'Some day,' said Laurence musingly.

'Will you play to me by and by? I should like to hear you.'

'I seldom do,' said Laurence, glancing round expressively at the jovial group behind them, 'except to my professor, and to Linda in the evenings.'

'Ah, of course I should never think of bothering you to play to all these people—the music I've got on board will do for them—nor even to me, if you would rather not; but perhaps some time, if the fancy takes you to give me a great deal of pleasure—'

Laurence smiled. After all she liked this Englishman. He did not tease, he was not patronising. Gervase knew the right shade of consideration to put into his manner, even to a boy.

Already the little barge was miles away from Bleiburg. At every turn the river scenery became finer and wilder; but again it was Laurence alone who had a glance or a thought to spare for the sweeping willow-beds, the startled reed-birds flying off at the boat's approach, the picturesque broken rocks belting the shore, and the gentle bends and lake-like reaches of the stream. Lacy, by command, had uncorked some bottles of Rhine wine, and the company sat in a circle, sipping out of spiral glasses, proposing comic toasts, and replying in burlesque speeches.

'If only Mrs. Damian could see master now!' thought Lacy the saturnine, as he watched Gervase in his glory, seated between his German professor's wife and Linda, king of his company, and thoroughly relishing his undisputed sway.

Towardstwo o'clock they landed at their destination. The inspection, from the bank, of the Nixie's haunt—a huge boulder of rock rising in the midst of the stream, and on which, when the moon cast certain shadows, the eye of faith could, it was said, discern the white figure of the water-sprite—took up the attention of the party for a few minutes. Meanwhile Lacy and the boatmen, in an open glade in the woods behind, were preparing what to the majority of the guests was the event of the day—the cold collation.

It was pronounced perfect. Lacy had surpassed himself, and forgotten nothing. Though to Gervase's ideas the provision made

was extremely unostentatious, to his homely, thrifty-minded friends, unaccustomed to English ways, it seemed delicate, luxurious, and recklessly extravagant.

Under such exhilarating influences the spirits of the company rose and rose till the hilarity became a trifle uproarious. Laurence had been amused at first, though remaining perforce a silent spectator, with no little squibs to contribute to the fireworks of the entertainment; but in due time began to tire of the scene. The luncheon seemed interminable. At last a childlike impatience of sitting still bore down the remnants of politeness, and the youngest member was missed from the circle. Only by Gervase, that is; the rest were too busy with their knives and forks.

Laurence strolled down to the shore, where a little rowing-boat belonging to the steam-barge was moored. Here the violin had been left when they went to luncheon. The child stepped in, and sat there at ease, throwing crumbs to the water-birds that peeped out of the rushes, pulling at the aquatic plants, and sousing both hands in the water.

An hour may have slipped by thus, but still the jingling of glasses, clatter of plates, and convivial laughter behind the trees did not cease. Suddenly the truant was startled by a voice close overhead.

'Hullo! why, what on earth are you doing there?'

It was Mr. Damian, looking down from the bank above.

'Dabbling,' said Laurence, looking up at him.

'By Jove,' he laughed, 'I don't care if I come and dabble too.'

He made a long step into the boat, unfastened it, and pushed off into the middle of the stream. Then he seated himself in the

bows with a sigh of unutterable relief.

'Is luncheon over at last?' asked Laurence.

'You may well ask! Mine was, an hour ago; but Professor Katzekopf and some others are at it yet, and will never desist, I feel sure, till every dish is cleared. I'm sorry to say there's a good deal left still. But I'm beaten, I confess it, and positively must go off duty for a little while.'

He was rowing up the stream; a very few strokes brought the light little craft far onward. They shot along for some while in silence, no sound near them now but the rippling of the water on the sides of the boat. Gervase, whom the prolonged monotony of the luncheon had wearied even more than Laurence, was exulting in this unhopèd-for escape from the tedious festivity. There was something audacious, something perhaps not altogether courteous, in thus coolly absconding from his guests and leaving them to entertain each other; but he said to himself he could not help it; his company would forgive him. Possibly he cared too little for them, socially speaking, to weigh their displeasure against his desire.

'Where are they?' asked Laurence presently. 'They cannot *all* be lunching still. It must be four or five o'clock. Look at the sun.'

'Well, those who are not still at table, or table-cloth rather, are wandering about the woods in twos and threes, picking bilberries or wild strawberries or something. Each party will suppose I am with the other, so my escapade won't be discovered at once,' said Gervase, speaking to himself, contentedly. 'I mean to profit by it to enjoy a little fantasy of my own. You have

your violin there, I see, my boy, and you are going to play me something now on the spot.'

They were far ahead up the stream, out of earshot of the picnickers. Gervase, now turning the head of the boat, allowed it to drift back slowly, steadying it with a careless occasional dip of his oar.

'There now,' he said, reclining negligently in the bows, 'do begin. What a strange little fellow it is!' he added mentally; 'he's a new type to me. I must study him.'

Laurence looked up, piqued. Who was this young Englishman that he should give himself the imperial airs of a rajah? Gervase, who was one to telegraph to heaven for St. Cecilia to come down to sing him to sleep, if the idea seized him, was thinking how delightful it would be to have a violin-boy—a pretty boy like this, with bright hazel eyes and wavy hair—in his service, to play to him, and soothe him with music, when tired or fretted or bored—a sort of David and harp on the premises. If Laurence would only begin, he might fancy himself for the moment that Italian prince of the Middle Ages he would not have objected to having been born.

'Don't you hear?' he resumed, half-entreating, half-commanding. 'Now, do be a nice boy, and play.'

Laurence did not comply, though feeling rather less angry than might have been expected.

'I can't always play,' was the quick reply, 'as I might bring a chair or shut the door, because I'm told. I'm not a musical-box. Did you think I was?'

'I've offended him now,' thought Gervase; 'the boy's sensitive. I ought to have thought of that.'

'Of course,' he said, modulating

into a tone of gentle persuasion, 'I quite see how you cannot play in all places and to all people with pleasure; but I should have thought that everything was in your favour here—the boat scarcely moves, not enough to put you out; then as to your audience, I'm not a performer certainly, nor a judge, but music is a passion with me for all that. However, play to the river and woods, the sky and the sunset that's coming on, and never mind me'—throwing himself back in the boat—'only play.'

Laurence was not proof against his sincere entreaties, raised the violin, and began—obeying his injunctions to the letter; indeed, soon becoming forgetful even of his presence. At such moments the little musician was almost non-existent for the outside world. Laurence had early acquired the power of thus throwing all the nerve-force in her—so to speak—into one channel as she played. The boat they were in might have been swamped, a hailstorm have burst, a flood uprisen, Laurence would have been the last to find it out.

'The little fellow's a real genius,' thought Gervase, struck beyond all anticipation as he listened. He was the merest amateur in music; but genius is like the sun, its rays penetrate wise and ignorant alike. He was now contemplating the violin-player with an intentness of interest, which Laurence fortunately was too abstracted to perceive.

'That was a treat, indeed,' he observed, when the last notes had died away. 'Who taught you before you came to Professor Nielsen?'

'Allori, of Milan.'

'Then you were at the music-school in those parts with your sister?'

'No; but I had lessons,' Laurence replied, in a low voice, feeling uneasy and confused. Never having yet had to run the gauntlet of cross-examination as to the past, the child was entirely unaware of the difficulty, the impossibility to certain natures of prevaricating, or of parrying questions. Gervase saw, with half a glance, that he could elicit any information that he wanted, and for many reasons his present companion had vividly roused his curiosity.

'What was your father's name?' he inquired.

Laurence coloured painfully.

'O, why do you ask me?' she exclaimed, with agitation.

Gervase, quite unsuspectingly, had hit on the question of all others most calculated to put her off her guard. Her father's memory had been so inexpressibly dear to her, that the mere mention of his name in conversation with a stranger seemed a desecration.

'Because you are not in the least like your sister,' he said: 'you speak English with quite another accent, besides; and I thought she might only be your half-sister, perhaps.'

Again Laurence coloured, deeply perplexed, suddenly realising that if the mystification had been successfully sustained so far, it was only because no difficulties had presented themselves.

'Is she your sister?' asked Gervase, leaning forward and bending on the child's face a look of incisive scrutiny.

Laurence met it bravely, ready to defy, ready to be dumb. No one should force from her lips a secret they had a right to keep. But his expression unarmed her—it was so kind, so protective, and earnest, altogether so inviting of trust, that she replied frankly—after all there seemed no call for equivocating on this minor point—

'She is not my sister really. We call ourselves brother and sister, and people here suppose that we are. But we never even met till we left Italy at the same moment to travel here together, two years ago.'

Gervase was staring at the speaker in dumb amazement.

'You won't tell anybody,' Laurence continued earnestly; 'it is just as if we were related, you know. I'm sure if Linda were my sister I couldn't be fonder of her than I am: I can't bear to think we may have to leave each other when she goes from Bleiburg.'

Gervase's perplexity had reached its climax—Laurence looked at him wonderingly—he began a random sentence, broke off again, checked himself, suddenly struck by a new light. An idea that had been haunting him vaguely the last half hour had all at once sprung into shape. Was it possible? He *must* solve the mystery somehow, and Gervase had not moved in certain diplomatic circles for nothing.

'Then you are not Italian,' he resumed quietly, 'nor American. You are, of course, as I always thought, French.'

'Yes, from Dauphiné.'

'Ah; and Laurence, I've heard, is a girl's name in France,' he said very gently, but significantly, keeping his eyes fixed on her as he spoke.

Laurence sprang up, routed.

'Don't upset the boat, please,' he continued indolently, amused at the startled defiant expression that had rushed into her face. The conqueror, gazing at the light figure and delicate features before him, was thinking what a fool he was not to have found out the truth for himself, but to have waited for Laurence to put him on the track by her own thoughtless

admissions. 'Why do you look so frightened and angry?' he said, eager now to soothe and reassure her; 'I've known it from the very first—I guessed it at once, and never breathed a word to any one, nor ever will, not even to your sister.' Truth was not absolutely the same thing to him as to his little companion.

Laurence had reseated herself; but her hand on her violin trembled a little as she said, in a low voice,

'I came here on purpose to learn from Professor Nielsen, then I was told he never took girl-pupils, and so—'

'Well done!' put in Gervase approvingly; 'and he doesn't suspect?'

'Not he—nor any one; but they must all know soon,' said Laurence, with a heavy sigh at the thought of the day of reckoning awaiting her—'not yet.'

'You may rely on it that no one shall be the wiser any sooner for me,' he said firmly. 'There, Laurence, take my hand and word for it that I'll keep your secret as religiously as if I were the confessional-box.'

'And did you really find it out before, and never tell?' she exclaimed, impressed by such marvellous keenness and discretion.

He smiled reassuringly. The novel adventure had proved vastly more interesting than he had expected. They were now nearly in sight of the Nixie's Rock.

'Play to me once more, Laurence, just once, before we join those friends of ours. Never mind them—never mind anything in the world that is outside this boat.'

Laurence complied, this time nothing loth, and followed with the Romance she had played to Val Romer one memorable afternoon. It had remained her fa-

vourite, for all the simplicity of its melody, modulations, and effects; it had the charm of some old simple story of which one never tires, because it ever calls up the pleasurable impression of the first hearing, when all the changes and incidents and shapes that figure in it were new.

For Laurence it seemed destined to have distinct associations; and first and foremost, this present summer evening, it recalled that other long past in a distant land, among the woods on the Monte Motterone.

Gervase noted her expression; he waited till the close, then asked,

'Tell me, child; where was your mind wandering to?'

Laurence laughed.

'It is the music—I think it is two years since I played it last—and it brought back the day just before I left Italy, when I was saying good-bye to Val. How far off it all seems!'

'Who was Val?' asked Gervase curiously.

'He was English,' said Laurence, 'and the kindest friend I ever had. O, he was so good to me!' eagerly rushing into praise of that old playmate, as though to make up for the inevitable break that had come about between them. What was he doing now? How entirely he had dropped out of her life, almost of her mind!

But it was not Gervase's way to allow the thoughts of any companion of his to be occupied with another than himself. Laurence's must not fly off thus to absent friends. He tried the charm of his conversation on her now, to draw her out—devoutly wishing he could have prolonged this interlude as indefinitely as his German friends had prolonged their luncheon; but that was out of the question. His absence had been

discovered by them at last, as the straggling parties met. They now stood in a group, conjecturing. Nobody missed Laurence or troubled on that score. But what of Mr. Damian? Had he fallen into the river? Was it a little farce to mystify them? Was he preparing a surprise?

Suddenly Erlanger, who was looking up the stream, exclaimed,

'At last! There he is. Why, Miss Linda, Miss Linda, if he hasn't been making your brother play to him in the boat!'

The skiff had just turned the corner, and came drifting smoothly down the stream: Gervase reclining at one end, an ideal of youthful strength, with a face that was subtle beneath its apparent immobility; and Laurence opposite him, bending forwards and leaning on her violin like some graceful page in a forgotten romance.

'A picture, a picture!' cried Erlanger, clapping his hands.

The whole party applauded, excepting Linda, who was frowning a little; and Gervase lifted his cap to the group as they approached.

'Let me tell you, Damian, you're a privileged person,' said Erlanger, as the skiff touched the shore. 'That miser Nielsen keeps his prodigy out of sight. I've never heard him play a note.'

'I have the advantage of you,' said Gervase calmly, and standing up in the boat. 'I have not had enough music yet. *Mdlle. Visconti*,' in an appealing tone, 'come here; I want you,' he had noticed the cloud on her brow.

She hesitated, then came a step nearer, and stood on the stone to which the boat was moored.

'Sing something,' he said. 'Laurence shall accompany you if he likes.'

The Mermaid's song from *Oberon* rose to her lips, a happy

inspiration. It fell on their ears like a musical emanation from the surrounding scene:

'O, 'tis pleasant to float on the sea,
When the wearied waves in a deep sleep
be,
And the last faint light of the sun hath
fled,
And the stars are mustering overhead;
The night breeze comes with breath so
bland,
Laden with sweets from a distant land!
O, 'tis pleasant to float and sing,
Whilst ever our dripping locks we wring.'

The return journey was delicious, 'moon, eclipse, nightingales, and all!' said Lacy to himself, pleased with Nature for showing due respect for his master's *fête*.

Gervase scarcely left Linda's side for a moment; and she felt persuaded that, after all, it was purely from his interest in her and her concerns that he had gone out of his way to show so much attention to her supposed brother.

The whole crew were a little infected with sentimentality, and Heaven knows what was spoken, or whispered, or implied—what waifs and strays of romance were let loose to flit about, winged creatures of twilight, that vanish in a moment at the dawning of broad practical day.

On landing Gervase had to submit to an elaborated phrase, from each guest in turn, of thanks and compliments for what they called an 'ideal' entertainment.

His adieux over, he turned to Lacy:

'Have you paid those fellows?'

'Everything is paid for, sir.'

'Now recollect, all that remains for you to do is to hold your tongue.'

'That's easy, sir.'

'I'm glad you find it so;' and Gervase, elated at the success of his day's play, walked home leisurely, whistling the Mermaid's song. That and the violin ro-

mance were struggling for the preëminence in his brain.

Linda was so self-engrossed that evening when they reached home, that she was going off to bed in a reverie without wishing Laurence good-night, when the child's hand on her arm arrested her.

'Linda, I've something to tell you—something you'll hardly believe. I can't tell you how surprised I was. Mr. Damian has found out all about us.'

'What do you mean?'

'Found out first that you are not my sister; then the rest—*everything*.'

'Did you tell him?' cried Linda, in a voice half-choked with passion, and turning to Laurence a face metamorphosed with sudden anger.

'He guessed it,' said Laurence; 'asked me if it was not so. And he knew it all along, he says, and has promised not to tell.'

'Are you speaking the truth?' said the girl strangely, seizing her hand, and turning the light full on the child's frank bewildered countenance.

'Are you mad, Linda?' said Laurence. 'It was not my fault.'

Linda relaxed her hold.

'You're a little simpleton to go blabbing,' she said. 'You ought to have stuck to it through thick and thin. It was my fault ever to start such a piece of tomfoolery between us. I suppose now I must keep it up to the end. Happily that's not far off. Now tell me what Mr. Damian said, every word.'

Laurence's faithful matter-of-fact report of the conversation in the boat restored Linda's equanimity. Already she was half-ashamed of her senseless flash of jealousy. It was not the first of such outbreaks the child had seen. Linda laughed now, coaxed

and petted her; she wanted her to forget.

Laurence had never heard of lycanthropy; but when Linda was in one of her rages she felt just as if she were alone in the room with a wild animal.

CHAPTER VIII.

ELLE ET LUI.

A FORTNIGHT had gone by; the little water-fête was forgotten, and Gervase was congratulating himself that the dangers of discovery by his own people were overpast. There had been a poem upon it in the *Bleiburg Gazette*; the sheet had lain on Mrs. Damian's table for a week, but unopened. Moreover, the local Laura Matilda had proved so unequal to mastering an English patronymic, that it was doubtful if Mrs. Damian herself would have recognised the name she was so proud of, as travestied in the journal. But she had somehow divined that a little breeze of secret excitement was stirring.

For the last month Gervase had ceased to complain of dull Bleiburg, or hint at departure. He had set to studying German with double zeal; and was submitting with most edifying filial resignation to what again and again he had stigmatised as 'burial alive.'

'There's some new attraction,' thought Mrs. Damian anxiously. 'I must find out what it is.'

But Gervase had no confidant. His was one of those exceptional natures that need none. Most rigidly had he kept his own counsel as to what was going on in his mind.

That girl Linda was a little beauty. In a London crowd of

ornamental people she might, perhaps, have been overlooked; but when you come across a rare flower in frost-time, standing right in your path, you find a sort of luxury in undivided admiration.

But as a balance to the excessive homage of heart that the merely pretty face of an inferior creature could elicit from him, Gervase's supremacy struggled to assert itself somehow. He must subdue his idol. And the satisfaction he could derive from the successful exercise of his peculiar influence over the soft hearts and minds of maidens fair was, to his idea, emphatically the first of pleasures. No conceivable form of earthly enjoyment tempted him like the moral luxury of absolute moral domination. He must care for his game, too. To feign love for a pretty girl, to whom his heart remained virtually indifferent, he would have put down as inconceivably repulsive.

He liked of all things to *feel*, himself—to be allured, interested, fascinated—remaining meanwhile his own master. He must make his passions serve him. There was one that he served more than he knew—this passion for unbounded influence over the souls of the women he loved.

Linda the blonde, in her pale-green dress, and straw hat with water-lilies, singing the Mermaid's song on the rocks by the river, was as sweet an image as had ever haunted him. Then there were touches in her nature that piqued him, and placed her apart from the rank and file of fair-haired blue-eyed darlings—notably her intractable spirit, with its dash of Italian ferocity. She was a butterfly to look at, but a butterfly that might sting, a kitten with tiger possibilities. How jealous she could be! Gervase liked women to be jealous. He

went so far as to feel a frank sympathy with Queens Fredegonde and Roxana in their merciless behaviour to their supplanners. Altogether if she was queen of his fancy for the time being, he had established her right to the distinction.

Linda's own sentiments were subject to no such definite laws of motion and proportion. They were a chaos, an untried sea. When had she set her life's course by any compass, or ceased to shift the rudder as the wind and tide of inclination should set? Yet with Linda, this most facile of girls, Gervase, this most winning of men, was not to walk over the course, as she soon let him know. Again and again, after that day on the river, he found her avoiding him, and if ever they met, unmistakably fighting shy of his attentions.

Her shrinking from him half puzzled herself. Linda's views of life, it is needless to say, were not those of a nun. Principles of self-respect were as sounding brass in her ears. Virtue in her unwritten code of morality meant generosity, good-nature, toleration; and for the rest, the better part of virtue was discretion. She did not want for admirers, and in the superficialities of flirtation she was at eighteen as well versed as Gervase himself. But up to now no deeper feeling than the pleasure of vanity gratified, the smart of vanity disappointed, had been involved in any of her schoolgirl romances. But already Gervase had roused in her the germ of a deeper feeling, strong enough, it may be, to sweep away prudence, self-interest, regard for her main chance in the future, like so many straws. Already it made her preoccupied against her will, pensive, half-melancholy sometimes.

It was in one of these new

moods, absently musing because she could not help it of the *beau cavalier sans merci* that in crossing her path seemed to have left a shadow there, that Laurence found her one afternoon alone in the music-room.

The young violinist had entered quickly, cap off, hair tumbled, the little quasi-boyish face troubled and very grave.

'Linda,' she exclaimed, setting down her instrument-case, rather brusquely, 'he is going away.'

'Going away!' uttered Linda blankly, looking up colourless.

'Leaving Bleiburg for good; he has just told me,' continued the child hurriedly. 'It is sudden; he waits only till the Academy concert is over, and then goes.'

Gervase Damian going! Well, that the news should take away her breath, make her heart swell and her head swim, was, on the face of things, ridiculous. But the world was very wide. Should they ever meet again?

'What I shall do,' continued Laurence despondingly, 'I cannot think.'

'You?' cried Linda, bewildered.

'Yes, without him, when he is gone.'

Linda rubbed her eyes. She or the child must be mad.

'That's not all,' resumed Laurence; 'he wishes me to enter the Academy at once when he leaves, and—'

'He—he? Of whom are you speaking?'

'Professor Nielsen, of course.'

Linda's countenance changed oddly, and she confounded Laurence by a burst of hysterical tears and laughter.

The child was alarmed. Linda, recovering, tried as well as she could to explain away the revulsion of feeling that had made her cry. It left her *triste* and uneasy,

but had roused her from her previous inaction.

'Come,' she said, 'I want you to go to market with me. I promised Frau Schmidt that I would. It is late; but trust me to pick out the best of what's left.'

They started together accordingly, Laurence, in her fraternal capacity, carrying the basket.

'So old Neptune is actually going,' said Linda cheerfully. 'Why, Laurence, what a chance for you! You will now be saved the explanation with him you dreaded so much. Wait till the old savage is some hundred miles off, and then doff your disguise, if you please. The laugh will go against the Professor, and everybody will be delighted, hating him as they all do.'

'Linda, Linda,' Laurence objected, 'I sha'n't let him go away without telling him everything.'

'Then you'll be downright mad,' said Linda practically. 'Such a temper as he has! He mayn't smash your violin over your head, perhaps, when he knows you're a girl; but he may ruin your prospects here and elsewhere. He's very powerful, and he'll be furious with you, my child.'

'I know that.'

'O, you'll think better of it,' said Linda lightly. She was used to carry the day, with Laurence, in all indifferent matters. But when an important decision was at stake, and the two were in opposition, there was a tide that set in the younger girl against which Linda's arguments were mere straws.

A right pretty pair they made, as they went in and out among the market-women, Linda doing the parleying, Laurence the portering. They had become favourites with those German 'dames de la Halle,' who would pick out the

best of their fruit and vegetables for these nice-looking customers. Linda loved to linger, protracting the choosing process as long as possible, for the sake of a bit of talk.

This was not the first time that Gervase, who had discovered that there was a good chance of meeting her here at this hour, had happened to be returning from a walk by way of the market-place.

Perfectly well did Linda to-day see him approaching, and carefully she feigned to be blind till she heard his voice close by her side.

'Mdlle. Visconti, are you really so deeply engrossed with those radishes that you can't even look at me?'

Linda glanced up prettily.

'Of course I must attend to what's offered me to buy.'

'Then I wish you for a moment to look upon me as a cucumber or a melon. You might attend to me a little,' plaintively.

A pretty girl marketing looks very pretty indeed, especially if what she buys is picturesque and has idyllic associations. Eggs may pass, and fruit, and tomatoes, and watercress. Linda turning over the peaches and figs had never been more bewitching in her life.

'Are you coming to our concert,' she asked, 'to hear me sing? Three kreutzers change, please,' to the fruit-seller.

'Of course I am. How can you ask? But what concert? Tell me some particulars, please, for I never heard of it till this morning.'

'Ask Erlanger. He will give you a programme and so on. I have no memory. It is fixed for this day three weeks, at the Academy, and I am to sing the Jewel song from *Faust*. That's all I know. More radishes, please; these are overgrown. I'm leaving Bleiburg, you know, Mr. Damian.'

'Indeed!'

'Yes,' sighing. 'My good woman, those potatoes are past their first youth; and as to the turnip, I think a beetle has taken a fancy to it before me. Yes, Mr. Damian, I am off in the wide world again. My brother in Rome thinks he has paid enough for me already. I must shift for myself now.'

'And what do you propose to do?'

'Onions? No, thank you. What's the German for carrots, Mr. Damian? What do I propose to do, did you ask?' and she looked up into his face, singing softly,

'Chantez, chantez, ma belle,
Chantez toujours.'

Metaphorically speaking, Gervase was at her feet for that moment. One is really indebted to these creatures for being so charming.

But at this very instant he caught sight of Amy, attended by her maid Bessy, crossing the market-place, returning from their walk. Gervase's attention was immediately diverted to a quantity of curious crockery exposed for sale close by, just the sort of thing that his mother raved about; he remained deep in his blue-gray jugs till the two figures were well out of sight, and felt uncertain if he had been noticed or not. Meantime, Linda had concluded her last bargain. 'Good-bye,' she said to Gervase; 'I am going home.'

'Am I never to meet you except in the market-place?' he asked, in an injured tone.

'I don't know,' said Linda, with a wayward, provoking look Gervase found very irresistible. 'You see I am not yet a great artist, with time to myself, and a *hôtel* where I can receive my friends when I like. I am only a poor student, or I would ask you to come some day, when Laurence and I are at home.'

'To tea, for instance,' put in Gervase playfully; 'artist or student, there's no obstacle to that. Will you ask me, or won't you? If you do, I warn you I shall come. I want—well, suppose I want to hear your brother Laurence play once more.'

'My brother?' Linda looked up at him doubtfully, but his face gave no sign that he knew their secret. Gervase could be loyal in such matters. Linda might never have heard of the confession he had elicited, and he had promised Laurence to be dumb. Now if Gervase, from motives of loyalty or other motives, wished to keep a thing to himself, it would be as easy to raise the dead as to make him speak.

'*Apropos*, what has become of the boy?' continued Gervase, glancing round, for Laurence had disappeared the last ten minutes. 'Why, there he is; look at the little monkey, staring at the advertisements yonder!'

So taken up was Laurence with the placard she was reading, that it was only when Linda had come closer that her attention could be diverted. She scarcely seemed to see Mr. Damian, but burst out in a tone of delight, pointing to the poster,

'See, Linda, see! Can he actually be coming here?'

The bill contained a brief announcement of the expected arrival in Bleiburg of the celebrated violinist Araciél, a kind of comet among the star players of the period. Linda, as she read, became deeply interested also. Araciél was one of those successful artists whose fame extends from St. Petersburg to San Francisco. In any city his appearance would be a notable event; in Bleiburg it was a phenomenon.

'Well, if you are going to talk about Araciél,' said Gervase pre-

sently, piqued, for the new interest had monopolised Linda's attention, 'I shall wish you good-evening.'

'But you will come on Saturday,' said Linda promptly, turning to him, 'to tea with us *à l'Anglaise*. I shall ask Erlanger to meet you. He is a delightful professor to have. He is so sociable.'

Mr. Damian smiled the smile of defeat that is better than victory, and left her, more indisputably enamoured than ever.

'Gervase has something on his mind,' thought Mrs. Damian that evening; 'I never saw him so *distracted* at dinner before.'

'Gervase,' exclaimed Amy suddenly, during dessert, 'surely it was Mdlle. Visconti, Erlanger's pupil, that I saw you talking to in the market-place this afternoon. How did you ever get to know her? Mamma dear, she's perfectly lovely.'

'What?' interposed Mrs. Damian blandly, in a tone of surprise. 'Has Gervase actually succeeded in unearthing the little singer Erlanger is so wild about? Tell us all about her, Gervase. Amy and I are dying to know.'

'Ten to one you know more than I do,' returned Gervase resignedly. 'They say that she's thought a good deal of at the Academy here, and her little brother, who plays the violin, is something more wonderful still; he's to be the Paganini of the period,' he added, with an odd smile that puzzled his mother.

'Why did you never tell us you knew her?' continued Amy; 'how did you make her acquaintance?'

'Why, she's Erlanger's pupil, you goose,' put in Mrs. Damian; 'he and Gervase are great friends. Ofcourse he introduced them;' and Gervase assented silently.

'I am dying to hear her sing,' said Amy obstinately.

'Well, that's easy enough,' Gervase observed. 'The students have a concert at the Academy in a week or two. No doubt Erlanger can get you tickets; and I should think Mdlle. Visconti, as his crack pupil, will be sure to perform.'

There the conversation dropped, but Mrs. Damian had found the clue she wanted.

The approaching Academy concert was now the event of life to the students, who were working up for it zealously. Linda looked forward complacently to achieving there a final triumph ere leaving Bleiburg to enter on her profession. She was fond of holding forth at length, selfish length, to Laurence on the brilliancy of her prospects, thus forcing on the child a sad sense of the contrast afforded by her own. A few weeks more, and, Linda gone, she would be thrown on herself for the third time in her life, and without the infantine *insouciance* that had spared her the worst fears before. The coming crash made her giddy to think of. She would be disowned by the Professor, probably excluded from the Academy. Nielsen's malevolence to those who had offended him was notorious. The battle of life was to begin again for Laurence, and, looking back on the last two years, she clung yearningly to that happy time of hopeful work and day-dreams, of careless student life, with her pretty, good-humoured, and beloved adopted sister Linda.

It was tea-time. Erlanger dropped in punctually, a model guest who always knew how to make himself welcome. 'I bring,' he began, 'guess what I bring,—the latest news of Araciël.'

He was the bearer of a letter received that morning from the great man, and, being the single

Bleiburger who could boast of his personal acquaintance, naturally availed himself of his privilege to do so.

Linda assailed him with a storm of questions. Erlanger was equal to the occasion, and followed with a gossiping narrative. Subjects—Araciél's name, Spanish origin, history, private and professional, interspersed with wonderful anecdotes that would have taxed the credulity of less inexperienced listeners than Linda and Laurence.

The most interesting piece of information he reserved for the last. Araciél had accepted an invitation to be present at the coming Academy concert, and Erlanger laughingly exhorted Linda to be sure and sustain the honour of the institution.

'This is news,' said Linda gaily. 'Tell me, doesn't he require a promising soprano for his concert tour? I would go, for it would be such a good introduction. But he won't engage me; he'll want a star of the first magnitude.'

'I don't know,' said Erlanger shrewdly. 'Big stars like Araciél like to have little satellites.'

'Who has he got with him?'

'O, his wife in the first place.'

'What is she?'

'A good woman, English, with a contralto voice, who sits at Araciél's feet and mends his stockings. He is organising a concert tour. More I can't tell you; we shall know when he comes.'

But he had a number of good stories to tell about Araciél's domestic arrangements, and was in the midst of one when Mr. Damian joined the party at last.

'I am late,' he said as he came in, and Linda rose to welcome him. Erlanger's light paled on the instant; even Araciél became a thing of no moment. But Gervase, with the social tact and good breeding that stuck to him like

his skin, addressed his conversation largely to the glib professor, making the talk general during tea-time.

Then Linda rose and went to open the window. Gervase hastened to help her; they stepped out on the balcony, and seemed in no hurry to reënter the room. Erlanger, deserted by his grown-up listeners, continued to hold forth on his favourite subject to Laurence, whose attention never flagged.

'The programme of our concert is just out,' he said. 'That young Jonas, Nielsen's ex-pupil, is to show off. As a compliment to our visitor, they've put him down to play a concert-piece of Araciél's. The boy's mechanism is wonderful, but I can't bear the fellow because of his insufferable airs. It's a thousand pities you don't belong. Professor Nielsen makes no secret of it that he thinks twenty times higher of you than of him.'

Laurence sighed.

'This *Concert-stücke* is a clever composition,' continued Erlanger. 'Araciél sent me a copy. Would you like to see?' and he drew it from his pocket. 'I wonder what Jonas will make of it.'

'I wish it was me to play,' said Laurence ungrammatically.

'So do I,' said Erlanger. 'Next year, perhaps, your turn will come. But here's the music. If you like, I'll give you an idea of the thing.'

He seated himself at the piano, and began playing the opening phrase of the slow movement. Laurence, standing up behind him, joined in with the solo violin part, eliciting repeated *bravi* from Erlanger, who must talk even when playing. Their music made an appropriate accompaniment to another duet going on on the balcony.

'It was from here,' Gervase was saying, 'that I saw you first.'

'Yes, and we took you for a house-breaker,' laughed Linda; 'you startled poor Laurence out of his little wits. How did you manage the escalade?'

'Very easily. I'm not a German, always apprehensive of breaking my neck. You can see our balcony from here. I had often heard you singing in the distance; and that evening I said to myself that a glimpse of the singer I must have. So I made my voyage of discovery, and got my reward.'

Here Linda sighed opportunely.

'Am I never to see you except in a crowd?' he resumed pathetically. 'Is Erlanger, or your brother, to be always on guard to listen to what we are saying?'

His hand just touched hers as he spoke; his voice thrilled her by its gentle earnestness.

'How can I help it?' said Linda sadly; 'you know my lonely position—that I have my future to make for myself.'

'The future, the future?' said Gervase impatiently. 'Must we always put that first? Just now it seems you can think of it; but I cannot.'

'I must,' said Linda wistfully, 'though it would be easier to forget.'

'Forget,' he said playfully, 'and think only of now and of me.'

Linda looked up; her reply, whatever it was, had died on her lips. There was a minute's silence; the music from within filled the blank for both. Laurence, deep in her task, had just reached a passage of peculiar charm, and the sweet notes struck on Gervase's ear like a message from another world, half alluring, half tormenting by its mystery. His gaze grew vague; he relaxed his pressure of Linda's hand, and quite unconsciously remarked aloud,

'That boy plays divinely!'

Linda, nettled, strove forthwith to cut short their *tête-à-tête*. She stepped back into the music-room, joined the others; and it was all that Gervase could do, by superhuman exertions, to remove the unfavourable impression caused by his unlucky unaccountable absence of mind. However, Linda relented at last, and delighted her guests with a performance of the song she was to sing at the concert. She then dismissed them both, Gervase very much in love, and letting his imagination run on strange plans for the immediate future.

He reached home barely in time to dress for dinner. He was too preoccupied to notice Lacy's portentously solemn face till the latter began, in ominous tones,

'I've got to tell you, sir, that Mrs. Damian has found out all about the picnic.'

'The devil she has!' exclaimed Gervase, forgetting himself—he did occasionally. 'What damned fool has been blabbing now?'

'I don't know yet, sir, what put her on the track; but Bessy, at tea to-night, tackled me about it, chaffed me horrible. Of course I turned a deaf ear, sir, and a dumb tongue; but there's no doubt now that she knows all—down to where we had the lunch from!'

CHAPTER IX.

REVELATIONS.

MRS. DAMIAN had blinded herself as long as she could to the fact that her boy was grown up, that the time for him to depend on her, or allow her to dictate to him in important matters, was past. It is so easy for such a detaching process to go on for long gradually, unowned, till some day the weaker

one—grown the stronger—by some natural step, quietly taken, forces on the ex-protector a sense of the change. It strikes then like a sudden loss, is felt like a tear in the tenderest membrane, hardest of all hurts to bear with philosophy.

But Mrs. Damian, though suffering keenly from every fresh proof that her son was eluding her watch and ward, suffered like a Red Indian, in silence. She knew how, by showing temper, she would forfeit what remnant of influence she might yet preserve. She reasoned with herself, saying that a young man must have his fling, and that it was only her fondness which raised in her occasional mortal fears lest Gervase's 'fling' should clash with her plans in life for him. Of course he liked to be first in everything; must dress, dance, table-talk better than anybody else. Thus when it came to love, or play, the chances were that several women would, in their several ways, make fools of themselves for him. Alas, all her wisdom made the patient endurance of the withdrawal of his confidence no easier. Less and less of a moving power will she become in Gervase's life. He rises, she sinks; already, perhaps, he laughs at his former submissiveness, his respect and care for her motherly wisdom. Till a lingering regard for *auld lang syne*—nothing more on his side—will be the only link left between her, grown weak and old, the woman on the wane, and her day-star of a son.

And he and his concerns were the single source of strong emotion that survived in her after half a century of this life! If, at the expense of any crime, she could have retained her empire over him, she would have undergone

a temptation passing the temptations of young people.

She felt restless to act now, after the discoveries she had made. Could she sit quietly by and let him go ahead, signalise himself according as a wild fancy should dictate, set homely decorous Bleiburg in a ferment by his flirtations and extravagances?

Evidently he had fallen in love with this little singer—what was her name? Mrs. Damian saw nothing very serious in that. But it served to turn her secret thoughts towards England in general, Diana Francombe and Larksmere in particular—briefly on speedy settlement in life for her son.

When Gervase that night, a little nervous after Lacy's revelations, came down to dinner, he was agreeably surprised to find his mother in better spirits than usual, remarkably talkative and indulgent. She mentioned Linda, and alluded to the Academy concert (for which Erlanger had sent tickets) with perfect carelessness and good-humour. Gervase, for the life of him, could hardly believe, even now, that she knew of the *fête*.

The same evening, without a word to any one, she wrote off a note to her son's uncle and guardian. *He* should be the instrument to bring about Gervase's recall. Mr. Otho Damian, she knew, desired the match between Gervase and his cousin. Diana was, indeed, the wife *par excellence* for a proud, ambitious, poverty-stricken young lady-killer like Gervase. Though so young, it was easy to see that she took after her mother's family. She even wore her pinafores with a certain air and grace that astonished and struck admiration into the nursery-maids. The Francombe fortune, divorced from the

Francombe name, would, by this master-stroke, be secured to the Damians for present and future generations.

She saw but one objection; namely, that Gervase was, or considered himself, too young to leave his wild oats and marry. However, the chances were he might forget this if he fell in love with Di. She was not a girl likely to remain long unmarried; and Gervase would quickly perceive that now, if ever, was his opportunity.

There was another very substantial obstacle in the form of Sir Adolphus Brereton, suitor; but this Mrs. Damian dismissed. Why, he was forty, and Di only seventeen! The rival would simply be a stimulus for Gervase, who would take pleasure in cutting out the Baronet direct, and compelling the proud Diana to prefer himself, unrisen but irresistible, to Sir Adolphus, with his certain position and fortune, but his certain age.

Meanwhile Gervase, peacefully unconscious of the little web spinning around him, was paying his court to Linda on every likely and unlikely occasion—they were not many. She liked to torment him by her wayward moods, inwardly revelling in secret assurance of her conquest.

As the day of the concert approached, the hearts of all the Academy pupils began to beat in a distracting manner. It was to take place on the evening after Araciél's arrival, and thus serve as a kind of welcome to the artist, who had promised to attend. Every student bought his photograph: the girls to keep it in a scented case, or cover it with roses; whilst the boys, who ridiculed these sentimentalities, underwent none the less—such, at least, as figured among the per-

formers—secret serious pangs of excitement; hope and fear mingled or alternating.

With a single exception: Jonas, the crack pupil; Jonas, who had been counted competent to play Araciél's own composition in Araciél's own presence, and on whom Nature had bestowed the impervious chain-armour of cold fatuity. To all tremblings, all misgivings or longings, he, at sixteen, was as proof as Nielsen the sexagenarian himself.

If ever he gave fancy the rein, it showed him always the same picture—of Araciél crowning him with laurels, presenting him with the prize, and pointing him out to the students as his probable successor, and he, Jonas, accepting these honours calmly as one to whom honours are due.

The day before the concert there was a rehearsal at the Academy, which Nielsen had to attend, Linda also. She had been out since the early morning, and not yet returned when Laurence, late in the afternoon, went to the Professor's for a lesson.

'How did the rehearsal, the violin concerto, go off?' was the natural question that rose to the pupil's lips before they set to work.

'O, it went—went to the admiration of fools, at all events,' said Nielsen, with unsparing emphasis. 'Jonas is a hero, do you understand? We are all to learn from him. He played—you know how, for you have heard Jonas once, and to hear him once is to hear him always. But I told you never to talk of him to me. Thank God, he is no pupil of mine now, nor ever was but in name. Ah, it will be next year, when you are in the Academy, that they will see the difference between— Now what ails you? quoth the irascible one sharply, with a stamp of im-

patience at his pupil's change of countenance. 'I never mention the Academy but a black cloud comes over your face. Tell me the reason at once, I insist.'

Laurence faltered a little. 'Another time.'

'Not another time—now, this instant,' and he added, in a voice that for him was wonderfully gentle, 'Other lads are afraid of me, I hear, and perhaps I may have given them reason,' he said moderately; 'but if there's one who has no cause, it is you. Why should you hesitate to tell me anything that is on your mind, when I have always treated you as if you were my son? Speak out, then, like a man!'

Laurence looked up at him, striving for nerve. Was this the moment so long forecast and apprehended?

'That's right,' he said, very kindly and encouragingly. 'You're too nervous a thing, Laurence, by half; you grow pale and red like a woman. I won't have it. Now let me hear. O, confound that creature!' with sudden ferocity, as Lisbet knocked at the door. 'She has the strictest orders not to intrude during a lesson. I told her I should kill her if she dared again; and I shall keep my word one of these days.'

Old Lisbet was evidently prepared for the worst. She put up one hand to her face as she entered, to ward off the dreaded missile, at the same time interposing the door as a screen between her person and the avenger, as she extended her other hand with a letter, shouting out as quickly as possible,

'A message come for the Herr Professor from the Academy, marked "Important and immediate."'

The Herr Professor swore. Laurence took the letter from the

servant, who fled forthwith like one pursued, and handed it to the master.

As he read he uttered an inarticulate cry of surprise, and, it must be owned, of vicious gratification.

'That sneak Jonas—serve him right—has met with a trifling accident; it will give him a set-down that will do him good. He was tormenting an unfortunate strange dog—the inhuman fellow!—the creature retaliated—well done!—has bitten his fingers very severely. I am glad of it, heartily glad. He won't be able to touch his violin for a fortnight—soh!'

He threw down the letter, and leant back in his chair meditating, partly aloud,

'How about the concert now, the violin-piece? Araciel—the devil—what's to be done? He rose, and began pacing the room in an excited manner. 'To think we must have the chief thing struck out just because that ass Jonas— But I'll tell you what I'll do,' coming suddenly and dramatically to a standstill before Laurence. 'I have it: *you* shall play.'

'I?'

'You, my pupil. I send you as that imbecile's substitute.'

'But he is a student, and I am not.'

'I say that you shall play to-morrow night. You are not admitted yet, true, but you will be in a few weeks. It is contrary to all customs and all rules, but I will have it so,' and he drew himself up to his full height. 'I am the Academy' was legibly written on his countenance. 'This last time I shall have my own way,' as though time had ever been when he had not. 'It is an emergency, an exceptional occasion, that cannot serve as a precedent. If there were another

pupil in the school who could get through that composition, I would say, "Produce him." There is not one. You can. I would trust you without any rehearsal. However, you shall try it over with the band to-morrow morning; it is sure to go all right. Why that face? You are not going to tell me you are afraid.'

'No, no.'

'Then not another word; I shall not listen. Wait whilst I write a note for you to take to the conductor.'

'Master!'

The strange imploring tone and manner arrested him with surprise. He dashed down his pen, incensed at this futile attempt, whatever it might mean, at crossing his will, or rather delaying its accomplishment. He looked up with a frown, ready to annihilate the objections and objector by some withering sarcasm.

It had been the wild wish of the child's heart to play to Araciel. It had seemed hard to be shut out from participating in the tribute preparing for the artist. The temptation to grasp this sudden heavenly chance of sharing in it thus was infinite.

'What have you to say?' asked Nielsen harshly.

'Something I must have said soon, though not to-day perhaps, but for this. It forces me to. I want to ask you to forgive me.'

'What theatrical nonsense is all this?' growled the Professor, seriously angry.

'I'm in earnest, there's a good deal to forgive. These two years—' Losing all composure, Laurence broke off, and added fast and low, 'I know what I owe you, that no one could have taught me as you have done. All that I have seems like your gift; and yet you would never have given it me if you had known.

But if I came by it unfairly, I will let it go; if now you would have me give up the violin, I will, and never touch it again. I promise you.'

Professor Nielsen was at his wits' end. The strained agitated tone penetrated him in spite of himself. Laurence was in earnest, and Laurence's earnest was painfully intense.

He looked at his pupil blankly. 'Lisbet made a mistake, I see, he said, folding his hands in bewilderment; 'it was not Jonas, but you, who was bitten, and the dog was mad, I suppose.'

He now perceived that his pupil was handing him a letter, which he took and unfolded, Laurence's eyes watching his features as he perused it as eagerly as a prisoner the countenance of the magistrate.

'My own writing. *Sapperment!* Why, what is this?

"Professor Nielsen begs to say that he never, under any consideration, has taken or will take lady pupils, and this is a rule to which he can make no exception. Should Signor Allori's pupil be willing to give up the violin, and commence some other study at the Academy of Bleiburg, Professor Nielsen will do what he can to assist her in obtaining admission from the authorities."

He did not recollect at once, so completely had the circumstance passed out of his mind. Then, as he looked at the date and searched his memory, one by one the facts returned. Hastily he glanced up at Laurence. He understood.

The thunderbolt had fallen, and with crashing effect. His countenance was more distorted by violent passion than Laurence had ever seen it, even than on the day when he had turned Jonas out of doors. She tried to speak, but he silenced her with a hasty imperious gesture, and signed to her

to leave him. She obeyed. Was it a dismissal?

For a long, long while Nielsen sat burying his face in his hands. It was not the abstraction of thought, but of one slowly recovering from a violent mental disturbance. When he looked up, the first object he saw was Laurence's violin, lying before him on the table, where she had left it.

That was a memorable day for others in Bleiburg besides. About an hour earlier, Gervase Damian might have been seen leaving the church on the market-place with an elated air and step. He had seen Linda go in, followed her, and, favoured by the dusky shadows of the Rosary Chapel, they had exchanged a few words in private. Linda had news to tell. She had obtained a good engagement in the capital town of a little state not many hundred miles distant, and there, a few weeks hence, her professional career was to begin. Gervase bethought him, as he walked home, how he had warned his mother that if she insisted on staying at Bleiburg during the summer he should probably not remain a fixture, but take a holiday and a tour. The first was but his due, after six months plodding at German; and he now said to himself it would be worth while to run over to a certain ducal city and witness the *début* of a certain singer.

But that evening brought a packet of letters from England. Mrs. Damian pounced upon hers with avidity, and read them with much feigned surprise. Gervase frowned as he pored over his correspondence, nor noticed that his mother was watching him acutely.

At last, turning to Amy, she said, 'Quite a long letter from Mrs. Francombe, and an enclosure from Di to you.'

The girl took the note eagerly, and read:

'Darling little Amy,—It is all settled. Mamma has written; you must, you *must* not put off coming to us any longer. I promise you the most delightful party in the world; dancing, theatricals—everything. It is no use trying to say no. You are to come out. After all, there is only a year's difference between us, and you were to be presented next season. Now write and say we may expect to see you at Larksmere in August.'

Amy looked up, and half shrieked with delight; then, stricken with sudden misgivings—'Mamma, you aren't going to say we must stay here?'

'Hush, hush, you excitable child,' and Mrs. Damian turned to her son. 'Gervase, what does your uncle say?'

Gervase handed the letter over to his mother. She knew the purport already, as well as he.

Mr. Otho Damian had broached an important subject, and urged all-important reasons for Gervase's instant return. It was rumoured that a post, which, as a stepping-stone to higher things, tempted him considerably, was likely to be vacant. Only competition—social competition—ran high. It was imperative that Gervase should be on the spot to put in his claims to favour. Mr. Otho Damian had spoken of his nephew to Sir Adolphus Brereton, who chanced to be a moving power in the nomination, and who had appeared well inclined towards him. But there was no time to be lost. Patron and *protégé* must meet, and here was the opportunity. Time, three weeks hence. Place, Larksmere in Hampshire.

Mrs. Damian augured well from her son's silence and thoughtful

constrained expression. Clearly he saw the importance of the crisis. So she said not a word, confident that he would, of his own accord, act as she desired, whatever this sudden departure might cost him.

Good-bye, then, to Linda; away with her image! Nothing to remain but the recollection of a game left drawn, a play broken off after the second act, a conquest relinquished half achieved. Just a boy's romance, interchange of roses and rings, and a very few fond words; and a face—a picture—to dwell on. Must it end there?

That same evening he had made up his mind that it must. The little business with Sir Adolphus admitted of no delay. That night his letter to his uncle was written; also his mother's answer, accepting her sister-in-law's invitation, and an ecstatic note from Amy enclosed. A fortnight hence they must be in England.

So Gervase went to his room looking as black as thunder. Never had Lacy seen his master so taciturn, so absent, so thoroughly perturbed.

Linda, half an hour after her return home from church, saw Laurence come in with a face that told plainly what had occurred. The child was pale as ashes, with a haggard look in her eyes that frightened her adopted sister. Was Laurence, so strong and brave and resolute, going to give way at last? Being caparisoned like a man, she was credited by Linda with having a doublet and hose in her disposition.

'Well, how did he take it?' she asked inquisitively.

'I don't know,' said Laurence, with a little gesture of helpless despair; and she related breathlessly what had passed.

'You were excessively foolish to come out with it at all,' de-

clared Linda frankly, when she had heard, 'especially with such a capital chance for showing off just open to you. Suppose you had played at the concert. Araciell might have engaged you for his tour. You could have told him your story, and gone right away from Bleiburg, and there need never have been any stir. Nobody but old Nielsen has any right to be angry with you. Why, what have you done with your violin?'

'Left it at the Professor's. I did it on purpose. Unless he bids me go on, I shall give it up—for always.'

'What nonsense!'

'Linda, I made up my mind I would, when I began with him two years ago, unless he got to think differently—I hoped then that he would. He has taught me as only *he* could have done; it is but fair I should do nothing without his leave. It would be like stealing.'

Linda shrugged her shoulders. Talking was hopeless, she saw. Laurence was a mad child, quite intractable and deaf to reason. Such a character could never get on in the world.

'Well,' she said presently, 'I must be off again. We have to rehearse this evening. I'm really very sorry you've gone and ruined yourself, all for nothing. Knowing old Neptune's temper, you might have manœuvred a little. You've blundered into a desperate hobble, and I confess I don't see how you're to get out of it.'

With which cheerful prophecy she left the room. Laurence shook her head. She had acted deliberately, and repented nothing, not even now when she was left alone to the mercy of such nightmares of anticipation of the future as an over-excited imagination must raise. It was dismal company for so young a thing. The darkness

came on, yet she lit no candle, but stayed where Linda had left her, in the stillness of the dreary music-room, in the same attitude, with a feeling of shipwreck. She had risked a great stake and lost it.

A rap at the street-door made her start, and her heart beat quickly with vague terrified expectation. The next minute the door was flung open, and in marched Professor Nielsen himself.

There was just light enough to show him the little figure sunk in the armchair, and starting erect as he entered.

For a moment professor and pupil faced each other in silence. Then the former spoke mildly,

'You left your violin. How did you come to forget it?'

He was carrying the instrument-case himself. Laurence's lip trembled violently; she could scarcely speak.

'Not forget—' she began eagerly.

'You left it with me, then; and I—well, see—I bring it back to you,' he said, with a kindness—tenderness almost—that was more overpowering than taunts and reprimands. The child burst into a passion of tears.

'It was you gave it me,' she said, 'and I cannot take it unless you say that I may. I want to give up all you gave me, if you think I do not deserve it.'

'Come,' he said, putting his hand protectingly on her shoulder, 'I don't wish you to suppose I think lightly of this matter. You have forced me into doing what I would never willingly have done. If I forgive you, it is not because I take back my words, but because there is something higher and stronger than my will or than yours. Music is above even its professors.'

It was not as master and pupil, but as artist and student, that they met to-night.

'You had to prove yourself outside my law,' he continued. 'You have done so. What I hold to be a general truth admits of exceptions. It does not touch you. But are you equal to the gifts born in you, is what I ask myself now?'

Laurence was calm again, and listened with a kind of reverence as he spoke, whilst his eyes, no longer terrible, rested with a more than parental solicitude on the young creature whose gentle influence had insensibly humanised him.

'You have a great future before you. Be true to it. Never think there are not other things which will one day seem greater to you, and more dear than art, and tempt you to neglect it. The sacrifice for a man is very great; for a woman it is infinite. If you flinch from making it, I shall repent I ever taught you. Promise me something.'

'Everything.'

'That your vocation, if it cannot always hold the first place in your heart, shall always be the first moving power in your life.'

'I promise,' she exclaimed, in enthusiasm.

Never seemed vow more easy, more delightful. St. Cecilia was her votive idol, the rest was trash.

'I trust you. And for my own part I am willing not only to forgive you, but to further you in every way I can; and O, believe me, genius needs furthering.'

To Laurence this was a sort of consecration, as solemn and final as the self-immolating vows of a nun. She gave him her hand. There was a pause; then suddenly Nielsen resumed, in his usual dry imperative manner:

'And you play to Araciel to-morrow. That is settled. Here is your solo part. You can look it over with me at once, and to-morrow morning you try it with

the orchestra. I arranged that just now at the Academy before coming here.'

Will Laurence ever be quite so happy as she felt at that moment?

CHAPTER X.

ARACIEL.

THE violin-king had arrived. An infatuated pupil, after lying in wait for an hour, had been rewarded by seeing him pass on his way from the station with wife and child, escorted by Erlanger, in a fly. He was now lodged at the Golden Eagle, and all the professors were leaving their cards on him. With Nielsen he had been closeted for a long while. No further particulars could be elicited by the most inquisitive students. In vain they loitered about the hotel-door. Araciël neither came forth nor looked out of the window. Curiosity and impatience must bide their time until evening and the concert should come.

It began early; the room was well filled with pupils, their friends, and friends' friends. The Damians were the only foreigners present, and marked out as such by much that was un-German in their appearance, though of the conventional English type there was little enough in any one of the three—all small-featured and dark-haired, mother and daughter with an easy grace of manner that in Bleiburg was believed to appertain to French women only. As for Gervase, his distinctly Celtic face contrasted curiously in its superior refinement with the surrounding Berserkers; attracting withal so much flattering observation from the fairmaids of Bleiburg as must have wrung the hearts of the afore-mentioned

gentlemen had not self-admiration made them very obtuse.

The spectacle of the pupils *en masse*, the girls all arrayed alike in white, was pleasantly striking. They stood there like a holy order, in their novitiate, vowed to the service of art. No doubt, as in religious orders, there were faint hearts and false hearts among the throng; still there remained a good leaven, and the cause they served was good. And when does not the mere sight of some hundreds of human beings, all with one thought and intent on one aim, act with a rousing power and stir up sudden feelings of universal fraternity?

There was a wrong side to the picture, though; and Gervase, before the first part of the programme was half through, had made up his mind that such probationary concerts were, and needs must be, odious. Your finished *virtuoso* or *diva* appears before you, and electrifies you with a finished performance that seems to cost the performer but little. You know well that Rome was not built in a day; still, forbear to pry into the secrets of the building process, the toilsome steps by which so many seek that excellence so few are ever to attain. As an epicure would lose relish for a feast were he to watch it cooking, so is it disenchanting to witness the earlier stages of musical evolution—exhibitions crude and unfinished, at the best seldom more than promising. A students' concert is a sort of musical fair, and it happens rarely that among the mass of commonplace articles exposed there shines a gem or two that an expert, who can tell a diamond in the rough, will single out from the rest.

It was now Linda's turn to sing. She was seldom nervous; her one apprehension to-night had been lest Araciël, who had not

yet arrived, should come too late for her song. But as she tripped up on the platform a little commotion arose on the side benches, and whispers of 'Araciel, Araciel!' ran through the stalls. There was a moment's pause, and then the renowned fiddler entered to take his place among the pedagogues in the front row.

Professors, students, Philistines, and brutes—to adopt Heine's famous classification of German citizens—all broke into applause. Every eye was upon him, and each eye saw something different. Not that Araciel was a chameleon; his physiognomy was as well marked and distinctive as Napoleon's, and among a thousand might have been picked out as a musician's if only by its likeness to certain of his famous predecessors. There is a stamp that reappears again and again among such—a stamp the original of which we are generally content to trace back to Beethoven; but it may be found earlier still, and with similar associations. Search the canvases of Giorgione and Da Vinci, you will recognise the familiar cast in the features of the lute and viol players of their celestial orchestras and Venetian pastorals.

It was thus, and as a hero to worship, that he appeared to those girls and boys; not a few of their graybeard instructors knelt to him in their hearts as a sovereign genius. Gervase's first irreverent impulse, however, would have been to tell this sovereign genius to go and brush his hair, which was abundant and rather long; whilst Mrs. Damian, who had heard him in London, saw nothing in the world but an ugly mediæval-looking man, who fiddled marvellously somehow. But the notion of any sort of necessary relation of quality between the individual and the

originality and excellence of his playing was one she could not entertain, being accustomed to regard musicians as merely mechanical agents.

But in the young lady who had just warbled the first notes of her song Mrs. Damian perceived less of the machine, if less also of the artist. Linda was charming as she faced her audience; the coquette disguised as a schoolgirl *ingénue*, in plain white muslin with a badge of ribbon, hair simply braided, and a demure touch in her expression, becoming a scholar in the presence of her masters.

Mrs. Damian thanked Heaven her tactics had succeeded, and Gervase been snatched away from the toils of this dangerous, designing siren. That girl would surely have victimised her poor boy in some fashion, sooner or later.

Secure of her voice, unimpaired in its freshness and strength, Linda sang without a qualm; confident of winning everybody. The old professors might shake their heads critically; but they were smiling under their beards. Only Nielsen frowned without stopping from first note to last. Araciel, after one curious, acute, exploring look, subsided into a state of amiable acquiescence, evidently indisposed to be severe upon so charming a young lady, and the first part of the concert wound up with a triumph for Mdlle. Visconti.

The second opened with Araciel's concerto for violin and orchestra. Jonas's name stood on the programme; and here a master of the ceremonies stood forth to explain how the young gentleman was prevented from appearing, but that as the Academy were specially unwilling to omit the piece, it would be played by a private pupil of Professor Nielsen's.

No name was mentioned, and when Laurence quietly came on the platform, 'Who is he?' was the question that ran round the room. There were not a score of persons in Bleiburg who knew the child even by sight, and beyond a vague idea that it was a younger brother, or at least some relation, of the girl who had sung last, no one present seemed to have much information.

The contrast with the preceding performer was startling. The composure, earnestness, and extraordinary self-forgetfulness of Laurence's manner were suggestive of one offering a sacrifice at an unseen shrine, rather than bidding for the smiles and flattery and envy of mortal men and women. Yet the pale, grave, seraphic face prepossessed that audience as becoming blushes and arch play of feature could never have done. From the moment when the first few bars had been heard a new sensation had spread itself over the room, a conviction that this was different stuff from all that had gone before. No painful struggling here with ill-mastered tools, no tricks and evasions; yet the excellence lay less in a precocious finish of style than in rare qualities, with promise of future development. No premature dwarf art, but a display of youthful talent, such ability of hand and head, as augured great things for such powers when grown to perfection.

'That boy ought to go far,' was the unanimous verdict of serious judges.

'Clever little fellow,' said Mrs. Damian, with a yawn, for she had found the concerto rather long. Herson had been attentive throughout, which surprised her. 'Why, Gervase,' she remarked carelessly, 'I thought you hated violin concertos and infant prodigies.' He laughed, and Mrs. Damian frown-

ed, on suddenly recollecting that this child was associated with that pretty, artful little minx, Linda Visconti.

Nielsen, after the first moments, never looked at his pupil, but kept his eyes fixed on Araciél's naively transparent countenance. At first grave and neutral, then deeply attentive, his features soon relaxed, and his face became beaming with pleasure and excitement. At intervals he turned round to Nielsen, nodding, and adding significantly, 'But it's extraordinary, it's superb!' with the expression of delight of a child at some unimagined holiday treat.

Laurence took heed of nothing but the music in hand until all was over, and a loud recall followed, bewildering to the novice in publicity. A word of guarded approval from Nielsen had been the utmost acknowledgment ever accorded yet; and now a whole roomful of artists and amateurs were clapping violently, as they had not clapped for Linda, as they might have applauded a great artist. In the confusion of the moment Laurence at first saw nothing distinctly; then looking down, behold there was Araciél standing up and applauding vehemently.

That was a very sweet moment. All her life long Laurence remembered it, even when later and greater successes had faded from her memory.

The remainder of the programme was gone through with, but merely endured by the audience, on whom it fell flat. Laurence did not stay to hear it. Those who, when all was over, pressed forward to see this mysterious child, and congratulate master and pupil, were disappointed. The young violin-player had disappeared, with Araciél's parting words of approbation to

sleep upon in the first place ; and, in the second, Nielsen's parting admonition : nothing more nor less than a summons to be at the Golden Eagle to-morrow morning at ten precisely.

The injunction to be punctual was superfluous. Laurence was walking up and down in front of the Golden Eagle some twenty minutes before the clock struck, and the visitor ventured to go in,—and ask for Señor Araciél.

The porter shook his head. The Señor was not up yet. But Madame Araciél was, he believed, at breakfast ; and Laurence, coming by appointment, was admitted.

Her heart, that had not quailed before a public audience or Araciél's presence, trembled considerably at the mention of his wife. Laurence's notions of wives were necessarily limited, and chiefly founded on Frau Erlanger, a queen of society in Bleiburg, half ashamed of her husband's musical profession, but who relied on her superior social connections for raising them both—an intriguing, talkative, showy woman, a second-rate coquette and an accomplished *mauvaise langue*. Laurence had seen her once or twice, and unconsciously feared she must be a type.

The sitting-room into which the visitor was shown was in such hopeless disorder that it was difficult to believe that the tenants, who were responsible for its condition, could only have arrived the day before. Araciél's business letters, his parts, his wife's gowns, his child's toys were keeping company amiably, as though accustomed to the arrangement. The lady, to Laurence's temporary relief, was not there. The room was unoccupied but for a small being of about seven years old, sprawling on the floor, who at the entrance of the new-comer set up a howl, not

of fear or shyness, but of an imperious desire for breakfast.

She was a pretty child—her prettiness sorely disguised by her untidiness, which rivalled that of the room : fair hair, cut short to save trouble, and falling in stray locks right over her face ; buttonless shoes ; stringless, but not stainless, pinafore ; perforated socks, and ill-fitting blue frock, whose intense colour matched her eyes exactly. Laurence tried to soothe her, and soon succeeded, which was well, as a good half-hour elapsed before Madame Araciél came in from the adjoining apartment. The child was now perched on Laurence's knee, and chattering away in English, delighted to find one who could answer her in what was literally her mother-tongue.

Laurence started to her feet, putting down the little girl, who instantly set up a fresh howl at a fresh reminder of breakfast, conspicuous just then by its absence. 'Hush, hush, Cherubina,' the lady implored, advancing. 'Patience—papa will be here directly.' Then, as fair promises availed nothing, Cherubina probably knowing their net worth of old, she tried a biscuit from her pocket with better success, and the intractable infant came to hide her tears and gnaw her macaroon under cover of her mother's gown. Laurence meanwhile could not get over the surprise of seeing in Araciél's wife some one so unlike Frau Erlanger.

The face was still pretty and youthful, the features small, the expression both kind and happy—in a word, genial ; blue eyes like Cherubina's ; fair hair like the child's ; a complexion only a little less fresh, and it must be owned a toilette very nearly as disorderly. She wore what might be politely described as a morning-gown : a loose wrapper that had evidently

passed the night in a carpet-bag. Her hair had been hurriedly fastened up in a knot under a cap that was expected to cover all deficiencies. But Laurence saw none of these things; she saw only the frank face, with that self-forgetful maternal kindness in it, that to the orphan was a thing unknown, looking at her as no one had ever exactly looked before.

'Araciel has told me all about you—all,' with a stress, not severe or curious, however, on the word. 'Sit down, dear; I want to hear everything now over again from you.'

Her gentle protective manner won Laurence's confidence on the spot, and she began her story. When she had finished, she saw the tears in the kind blue eyes; and though Laurence did not fully understand why they had risen, her own deepest feelings were stirred by the dawn of a kind of sympathy of which till now she had been too ignorant to feel its want.

'You have been a little wanderer, indeed,' said Madame Araciel, taking her hand; 'but now you are to come to us, and make your home with me. It is all settled. Professor Nielsen has resigned you to our hands. Araciel will teach you all you have to learn, and you will let me be your mother. I know I shall love you. Do you think you can love me?'

When Araciel, after another half-hour had elapsed, suddenly appeared, he found them in close and affectionate talk, Cherubina listening attentively to a conversation of which, it being expressly carried on for discretion's sake in Italian, she did not understand a word.

'You have made friends, good friends—that's all right,' he said, highly pleased, advancing to shake hands, much embarrassed by Che-

rubina, who was now clinging to his coat-tails, and emitting loud shouts, this time of exultation; for the other door had just opened, and the long-desired, long-delayed breakfast-tray was brought in.

'You will take some coffee with us?' he said to Laurence, who having breakfasted at six was nothing loth; and the four placed themselves round the table, where, Cherubina's clamorous appetite having been partly stilled, the others could continue the making-friends process at leisure.

It was Laurence's first initiation into domestic life.

'Am I to tell you the truth?' said Madame Araciel when they parted. 'I was afraid of you beforehand. I had heard of your exploit, and did not like it; but now I have seen you, I seem to understand how it all came about, and I like you the better for it. Do you think you will be happy with us?'

'I shall, I know I shall,' said Laurence impetuously, her heart swelling with the delightful feeling that she was no longer without friends—a gratitude so deep that it seemed as if it must influence all her life to come.

As for Cherubina, she had already taken such an immense fancy to the new-comer that the moment the latter gave signs of departing she began to roar, and was only pacified by the assurance that this treasure of a playfellow was speedily to return, to live with them, her mamma had said.

It was seldom that Laurence forgot her adopted sister's affairs in her own, but the entire revolution in her prospects which forty-eight hours had sufficed to bring about could not but occupy her completely. She rushed home, eager to find Linda and tell her of all these astounding changes.

Linda was alone in the music-

room, seated by the window, with her face turned away. Laurence ran up and threw herself on the foot-stool at her friend's feet, and hid her face in her lap, striving to collect herself.

'Linda, I seem hardly to know where I am—such strange things have happened! Araciél—'

She looked up and stopped, checked by the listener's vacant, distant expression.

'Araciél,' repeated Linda mechanically, as if signing to her to proceed.

Laurence continued, effectually sobered by this coolness,

'He and his wife want me to go with them on their concert-tour. They want me to make my home with them, for some time at least. Professor Nielsen says I am to go, and that it won't be living on charity, as I shall help him with his pupils, and play with him when it is wanted. Linda, Linda' (was she asleep?), 'do you understand?'

'Araciél offers to take you as his pupil, and he will bring you out,' said Linda unconcernedly. 'It is a very usual arrangement.'

'I thought you would be glad,' said Laurence, hurt by the listlessness of this usually vivacious comrade. 'I have been so happy with you. I thought you were sorry—now you have to go—to leave me alone.'

'Glad?' Linda repeated vaguely. Then, seeming suddenly to wake out of a trance, she began embracing Laurence passionately, chiefly to hide her own half-hysterical agitation.

What had caused it? Laurence could not guess. Had any one been criticising her singing unkindly? Had Bruno been sending one of his brotherly epistles of admo-

nition? Linda was holding a letter in her hand at this moment.

Neither. The letter was from Gervase Damian. He has been called unexpectedly to England, and must start immediately.

But to Laurence's pathetic entreaties to know what had distressed her, Linda would vouchsafe no reply. She tried to recover her spirits, but was not herself all that busy eventful day. It was inexplicable to Laurence how she could be so apathetic. Magnificent compliments on her singing, brilliant auguries for the future, flattering certificates, all the Academy honours were hers. What more could her heart desire? What was this mysterious sorrow which she could not reveal, and which made all these delights of no account?

Laurence never knew. The next morning Linda was more collected, and press of business forced her to be active. She was starting at once with another girl for Darmstadt, to fulfil her first public engagement, and Laurence was to leave Bleiburg the same evening with the Araciéls.

Laurence, often afterwards, thought of that night—the hubbub at the station, Araciél running in every direction but the right one after missing luggage. Cherubina divided between sleepiness and fretful moans. Madame Araciél loaded with miscellaneous packages. Herself in one of Linda's discarded toilettes, leading the child and starting off with her new friends in one train, Linda in another. The last thing she saw was a white hand waving to her out of the carriage-window. By dawn the next day both girls were far from each other and from the stage of their student-life.

FORTUNES MADE IN BUSINESS.

XVI.

THE REVOLUTIONS OF INDUSTRY : W. H. PERKIN, F.R.S.

HISTORY, not so irrationally as some think, is the history of war and revolution. Even the slow but decided movements of policy strike the mind less than the incidents of some well-known battle. Waterloo to most men, whether they read or not, is a great volume of history. There, in that last conflict between Napoleon and Wellington, even the thousands of combatants are lost sight of beside the two striking figures of the victor and the conquered. All is concentrated into the struggle between the two men. We have not far to seek for a cause of what is truly natural, and which touches the feelings of mankind. Of the tens of thousands who fought, we do not and cannot know the names. Were one of them a kinsman of ours, then we should know the battle in his name; but for men whom we cannot embody we can conceive no deep emotion. It is not from want of fellow-feeling that our thoughts turn, whether we will or not, to those whose names make Waterloo, for each of these fills out a story. It is not only the Napoleon who fought and lost at Waterloo, but we see all in one and quickly the great Emperor of the West, who bore down the freedom of mankind, and threatened ours—he who after died an exile, imprisoned, entombed, in our island of St. Helena. We well know him in his dress as much by his cocked-hat as by anything, a figure familiar to the world.

So too the victor, who lived long, almost to this day. These men have pictures, statues, monuments; but the brave warrior who poured out his blood to death sleeps with his fellows under the rank turf or the oft-turned furrows of the corn-field.

A debate, a law, which to this day touches the fortunes of every one of us, is taken like the wind and weather almost without thought, and with about as little knowledge of how it began and has been worked out. Indeed the impersonal affects our minds but little; and yet when we can be brought to look at some of these studies they are as strange and as eventful as many a fight and many a campaign.

A song—what is lighter than that? There is a song, one hardly knows who wrote it or who composed it, and when we are told a name we have as small a notion of the man as when we knew not his name. The ‘Marseillaise,’ that heightened the horrors of one revolution, and which its charms of song never soothed, made ready the way for that of 1830. Forbidden, it was sought for more, and it was a greater enemy of the third Napoleon than any conspirator. If the Republic lives long it may become its triumph-song; but as yet the ‘Marseillaise’ heightens the discords of every wild reactionary movement. In all the literature of music and song there is none

like this—so married to the sword and to the dagger.

The dead long entombed may leave words to move our feelings—words we can understand and take into our minds. Such, of those who live beyond the tomb, is the spell of Shakespeare. His school has been driven off the stage and small men fill his parts, it may be in a foreign accent or in a foreign tongue. Even to read his words is, nevertheless, enough to enthral men's fancies. There is no tie binds new England so strongly to the old, and joins the two great halves of English kindred, as does the spell of Shakespeare, and in Germany it is making ready the way for a new league of the Germanic races.

All this is, however, so fully human; but where a subtle influence, nameless, almost unknown, penetrates into our homes, and changes the settled customs of a hundred years, or it may be gives a new purpose to that of yesterday, it is a marvel like the earthquake or hurricane, although it is so quiet and so still in its approach. The fashion that came in but yesterday, and yet to-day is doomed—some folly as we call it that is laughed at, some trifle of which no one knows the beginner—may bring a thousand artisans to want, and settle penury in many a pleasant home. Whether women wear glass or steel, ribbons, feathers, or flowers, will in all days, but most in these times of swift travel, act even on the savage in his wilderness.

The doom of the slave-trade has so stimulated ivory-hunting, that elephants are already driven away from vast regions. The want of real ivory creates a demand for the imitations, and the ivory-nut has been gathered by ship-loads from many a desert shore, until the overstocked market stops

the trade. Ostrich feathers were ever rare, and were a privilege of the wealthiest; but the farming of tame ostriches gives such a crop, that every girl in the streets of every English town has a feather in her hat.

Thus one perpetual revolution of industry is taking place, sometimes put down to the freaks of fashion—cotton buttons for steel, bugles for feathers—but more often the result of the theories of the philosopher in his closet turned to practical account by men of business.

The substitution of a mineral dye for a vegetable dye, of a dye dug out of the bowels of the earth for that of a flower grown under the sky in the open fields, was the result of the union of two series of investigations instituted with no reference to the definite end we have under consideration. It was natural that chemists should occupy themselves with ascertaining the physical constitution of the colouring substances of madder. These experiments occupied many men, and it should be observed that the results were confined in their influence to publication in purely professional journals as matters of scientific interest.

Another course of experiment which engaged chemists was the examination of hydrocarbons and allied substances—in general terms the products and combinations of coal. If we consider that coal for some purposes, as for lighting, exhibits the properties of animal and vegetable materials, say tallow and colza oil, we can understand broadly the nature of the alliance which exists between mineral or inorganic bodies and organic bodies, and the study of which has been a distinguishing feature in modern chemistry, leading to most remarkable and practical results,

and affording great encouragement to pure scientific research.

It has appeared extraordinary to some that the perfumes, flavours, and colours of flowers and plants should be imitated and simulated and extracted from the most filthy sources, and it may be said that the results are not equally pleasing. No lady now knows what is the scent she puts on a handkerchief, or applies as a relief to suffering. No man can tell what horrible constituent of Hamburg obliquity distinguishes the contents of the bottle with the pretentious capsule and brand. No poor woman has assurance of what replaces butter in the article under that name for which she has paid more than the full price. These are disagreeable methods of learning the unity of matter, and the many resources which Nature possesses when her secrets are made known.

Messrs. Graebe & Liebermann were among the first who conceived the idea of a common constitution for the madder colours and for coal products. It followed that if they could establish this, one set of elements could be substituted for the other. Graebe commenced some researches in quinone, a body allied to benzene, and afterwards, in conjunction with Liebermann, turned his attention to the alizarine of madder. They found the exact relation of alizarine in the hydrocarbon anthracene, which is contained in coal-tar.

As happens in such cases, the minds of others were turned in the same way, and many discoveries were made; but Graebe and Liebermann definitely applied themselves to the production of artificial alizarine, and in 1866 took out a patent, but it proved of no practical value. By this time the attention of Mr. Wm. Henry

Perkin was called to the matter. He was a student of chemistry and the son of a manufacturer, and after a long course of experiments he succeeded in obtaining a process by which the desired substance could be produced. So early as 1868 he was able to bring his results before the Society of Arts, and he has since steadily pursued his researches, and published a number of papers recording his own progress, and, what is of particular value to the scientific world, his failures. He has thus very greatly contributed to the advancement of this new and now important branch of industry. While his inventions have brought wealth to him and his family, he has by his application to pure and applied chemistry rendered very great services to the scientific world, which are duly appreciated. Many have laboured in this field, and various claims are put forward; but the discoveries and investigations of Mr. Perkin have put England in the foremost rank with Germany and France.

Having made his discoveries, Mr. Perkin proceeded to turn them to practical account. Fortunately for chemists, they are associated with manufacturers in their pursuits, and become men of business, instead of being helpless schoolmasters and scholars, as in some branches of science. While others are dependent on professional salaries, chemists have made large fortunes by patents or manufactures. Every man knows that by some judicious observation or careful research he may become acquainted with a property of matter which may lead to important results and produce great wealth. Thus he is under the double stimulus of fortune and fame, and an immense amount of unseen labour is gone through,

sifting through and over again the cinder-heaps of science, very often without any happy ending. What has been made of refuse products alone is something wonderful to contemplate. Whole branches of industry depend for their material on the waste of others. In many cases not a grain of substance is lost. Thus the goldsmith's filings and sweepings are reproduced as metal, and the diamond-cutter's dust is made available for fresh operations.

Mr. Perkin was fortunate in being associated with his brother, Mr. T. D. Perkin, who took charge of the business department. They set up works in 1857, little more than twenty years ago, at Greenford Green, near Harrow, and on the Grand Junction Canal. They were at first employed on the mauve dye, but afterwards were also used for the production of various other coal-tar colours. For these latter purposes from time to time some of the older plant, no longer applicable, was made available for new experiment or production.

It was not till 1869 that their manufacturing experiments for the production of artificial alizarine were commenced. The first question was as to the production of the raw material, the substance which men of science had entitled 'anthracene,' and the history of how it was dealt with is not without interest. At that period anthracene was unknown in the large trade of the tar-distillers, and was a scientific curiosity, not a commercial product. Experiments had, therefore, to be made upon its preparation, not only to obtain it, but also to get some rough idea of the amount that could be produced from coal-tar, as, unless it could be got in quantity, artificial alizarine could not successfully compete with madder.

In his experimental researches in 1855 Mr. Perkin had employed coal-tar pitch, and distilled it in iron pots. He therefore naturally selected pitch as his first source of anthracene; and having a number of iron retorts ready for use on the works, many tons were distilled. This resulted in a sufficient quantity of anthracene to give the firm confidence of a supply; and yet this quantity was one per cent—a bare one in a hundred—of the pitch distilled. The anthracene, however, was a more valuable product than the pitch; and the mauve dye was in still smaller quantity than the anthracene, and of a far higher price, yet it was the ultimate product of the residual or refuse matter of gas-works. Tons of coal had been converted into gas as a primary manufacture, and the mauve dyes were only a few pounds.

Having found that the last runnings of the tar-stills were richer than the first, Messrs. Perkin asked Messrs. Blott of Poplar, the large tar-distillers, to collect the last runnings. These were set aside to cool, and deposited considerable quantities of anthracene, which was collected in canvas bags; and it was found by this means that anthracene could be obtained on a large scale. Thus a new manufacture was established; for Messrs. Blott commenced to prepare this substance in quantity, so as to supply the Greenford Works. Other tar-distillers were then communicated with in England, and so much anthracene was obtained that it became unnecessary to distil pitch.

On receiving their new product Messrs. Perkin pressed it in hydraulic presses, so as to bring it into solid cakes of only one-fourth of the bulk. In time the manufacturers have come to compress

their anthracene before sending it into the market, thereby largely reducing the freight, fitting it for being better handled, and enabling it to be transported to a greater distance. Indeed, a ball once set rolling in the industrial world, there is no telling how far it may roll, and we get a regular history of a house that Jack built connected with small canoes.

The mauve manufacture was one continuous series of experiments and successive improvements in the purification and preparation. Sometimes a good process proved injurious to the apparatus; sometimes an imperfection in the manufacture served as a substitute for some expedient. Residues were burnt in order to recover the potash temporarily used, and so to employ it again. Experience provided a succession of expedients, as is found in the life of all such manufacturers. Messrs. Perkin found it necessary to prepare their own chlorine, so as to obtain a more rapid production for the market of their material.

A very curious trouble to the manufacturers in making anthraquinone has been the large amount of chrome alum liquors produced. These are of a dark-green colour and acid character, and if turned into the sewers they soon give warning to the inspectors, while very little chrome alum can be sold as a colour, because it is of very limited consumption. Now the stuff is being reworked up into a chromate; but if it were not for the sanitary authorities it would have gone into waste. Another substance wasted on a large scale is sulphuric acid, of which 3000 tons are dissipated, which might be saved.

As sulphuric acid was largely used, a great destruction of the

iron vessels took place, the sulphuric acid itself being kept in glass carboys, a very dangerous expedient, and which has been the cause of many accidents. There is a story of the last century of a fire taking place in a carrier's cart in the streets of London, through the bursting of a bottle of vitriol, which destroyed silk, lace, and other goods to the value of 5000*l*. The German manufacturers having latterly employed fuming sulphuric acid, a very strong acid has been prepared, which is found to be without action upon ordinary tinned iron, and now it is actually stored in vessels made of that material. A demand arising for the production of sulphuric anhydrite, a new industry has been stimulated.

When the Messrs. Perkin brought their artificial alizarine into the market, although it possessed certain advantages over madder, yet, as they knew, they had to compete with the latter; it was therefore useless to ask relatively higher prices. At first the alizarine was sold to the Turkey-red dyers of Glasgow and Manchester; but as it produced a more scarlet shade than madder or its extract, garancine, it was mixed with these. In this way for some time it kept up the sale of madder while directly competing with it. Although mixed with garancine, it produced shades more brilliant than when garancine alone was employed, but at the same time not too scarlet for the Turkey-red buyers.

Thus was begun that flood of bright colours, which in the last few years have been so striking. They are not, as some have supposed, brought forward under the influence of taste or fashion in their cycles, under which colours fashionable and favourite for a day go out of use. Taste has had

as little to do with it as fashion. The manufacturers not only produced one new article—and the public run after novelty as novelty—but they produced a succession of novelties in colour. Strong is the saying that there is nothing new under the sun, and few things are brought out that seem new to us; but a history soon appears which tells that even these have appeared before. It is because novelty is this rarity that we cling to novelty and the shadow of novelty; and before anything can become stale, if we have not something new, we take up some fashion which is old and forgotten, and so looks quaint, odd, if not really new. The mauve colours and their successors have been true novelties, and have exercised a great influence on the female mind. Thus wherever mauve or magenta or some fresh modification could be applied to a material, it was welcome.

Some conditions tend to bring colours under stable influences. Green is a holy colour among Mussulmans, and its application is limited. Orange acts on some of the Irish like red on a bull. In one shape or another, and particularly as ribbons, in these days a new colour can be flashed in the eyes of women all over the world, and the consumption becomes immense. Thus it has been with these dyes. A Parisian milliner, man-milliner or she, could only impose magenta on a limited crowd; but the manufacturers could send it everywhere, and it would speak for itself.

The sense of colour is one which is widely diffused even among the lower animal world, and there can be no doubt that these chemical applications of recent years have produced a corresponding influence upon mankind. No invention more useful has perhaps equalled the effect of

these fleeting hues, changeable as are the skies.

It is very well known that many once bright streams of our northern counties now flow murky-stained with dyes, and are made unfit for the drinking of men or kine. Thus, as our population grows, the supply of water becomes less, and at length the pollution of rivers is dealt with by law. It is claimed for the new dyes that they do not much stain the streams, whereas madder is full of ground woody stuff, of which some ten thousand tons were yearly floated into the rivers.

In the supply of new material for anthracene, although abundant complications arise according to the kind of coal employed in the gasworks, as yet England has had great facilities, because coal is abundant and gas largely made. The coal that is most favoured in the works being cannal, does not produce the most anthracene, which is yielded by the Newcastle and commoner coals. These effects have to be considered in estimating the anthracene produced, because as it is in a raw state its value depends not on its quantity, but on the degree and nature of the impurities mixed up, and which have to be got out at greater or less cost. Thus, as it is with wool, good wool may be worth less than lower wool if the good wool is not well washed, but is left full of burrs and impurities, which give trouble in working it up. From want of care in these matters the produce of many countries brings a smaller market-price.

We have spoken of the abundant supply of the material for dyeing from the gasworks, and of the advantages we in this country possess; but such are the disturbing effects of invention that the character of the trade may be

at any time affected. Thus, if electric lighting largely extends, as it is in the way to do, that means a restriction of gasworks, and that, so far as these matters are concerned, means a reduction of gas-products. Then, as Mr. Perkin suggests, it would have to be met by distilling the coal at the pit's mouth.

At first, in 1870, the Messrs. Perkin were able to get anthracene at 9*d.* to 1*s.* 6*d.* per cent per cwt. ; but as the demand and competition of manufacturers increased, the price in 1872 stood as high as from 1*s.* 6*d.* to 5*s.*

Another coal-product besides anthracene is used in the dye-works, and that is naphtha, which is employed for purifying the anthracene. The anthracene itself has an impurity which is very troublesome, and that is paraffin, another of these chemical products now of such value for lighting.

They say there is no rose without a thorn; and if this is so with flowers, so does it seem to be with dyes. In crude anthracene, and the oils accompanying it, there is a peculiar organic base called acridine, from its acrid properties. The vapour causes sneezing and coughing, and it gives to the oils accompanying anthracene a very irritating action when rubbed on the skin. In hot weather the workmen employed in pressing or otherwise working with crude anthracene sometimes suffer very considerably from the pain it temporarily produces. It will be remembered that some time ago stockings were sold of the most remarkable and tempting hues; but the ladies who bought them, not for the legitimate purpose of covering their ankles, but of displaying them in such glory, were subjected to severe retribution. Dreadful blisters were raised,

and the exhibition was continued under the doctor's auspices. This was laid upon picrodine. Of course the haberdashers gave certificates that there were no poisonous ingredients in the hose; but this gave no consolation to the victims. Certain hues became unsaleable for stockings or gloves, and the tempter in vain offers the bait to female vanity. Painting the face is not unfrequently attended with deleterious effects, or even with death; and hair-dyes containing preparations of lead have brought on paralysis. It may be a matter for grave consideration to moralists whether, as tartar emetic is put in bottles of wine, to which pilferers have access, a little acridine or picrodine might not be judiciously mixed with all artificial appliances for simulating beauty. Thus science might be made available in repressing the weaknesses of womankind, always excepting the danger of a mischievous damsel putting a little acridine on her father's fleecy hosiery.

Having said so much about anthracene, it may be well to see what its operation was upon madder and garancine. In 1859, and again ten years later, the value of madder was 45*s.* a cwt., and for the Turkey qualities 50*s.*; and for garancine 150*s.* The total import into this country was worth a million sterling; the quantity of madder being 305,000 cwts., or 15,000 tons, and of garancine 45,000 cwts. The garancine was brought from the Continent. The madder from Turkey employed a large amount of freight, chiefly in English steamers. Such was the effect of the competition that, in five years, in 1875, the trade was brought down to a third in quantity, and in 1878 the import of madder was only one-tenth of what it formerly was, or 15,000

cwts., and of the garancine not one-twentieth, and still declining. The value has shrunk still more, for madder in 1878 was worth 17s. per cwt., and later 11s. instead of 50s.; and garancine has fallen to 65s. Thus the whole value of imports, formerly of importance, and amounting to a million, is now between thirty and forty thousand pounds.

Of the Dutch madder imported the use is chiefly for wool-dyeing; and even the wool-dyers are trying artificial alizarine.

The displacement of commerce is the more noticeable, as it does not represent a real loss of trade, but the contrary. The madder and garancine so reduced, and which had been paid for abroad, were replaced by substances of which the material was of home extraction, and, indeed, as already shown, what had been a waste product.

This gave us a great commercial advantage; nor was this confined to an economy of nearly a million sterling. The possession of the new substance enabled us to compete very effectually with the foreigner in dyed goods, which we could produce more cheaply and expeditiously, and we were also able to supply foreign markets with the dye-stuffs.

Then we came to another aspect of the matter. Many of the new processes were of English invention; but as patents were not granted to our inventors abroad, the foreign manufacturers, after a time, produced the articles on cheaper terms, and besides supplying continental markets they even attempted to get into the home market. This was done by a commercial fraud, which remained for a long time undetected. In fact the unscrupulous Germans imported into this country the dyes under the name of garancine

until detected at the Custom House.

Although the scientific bases of the discovery were laid in Germany, the practical manufacture was established in England, and, for some time, Messrs. Perkin & Sons had it to themselves. At length in 1871 Messrs. Graebe & Liebermann were stirred up to turn their discovery to account, and began to supply the continental market. In time other firms in France and Germany engaged in the trade; but Messrs. Graebe & Liebermann held a large share of it.

So far as is known, England makes only one-seventh of the total amount; France and Switzerland each a smaller quantity; and Germany the lion's share of nearly two-thirds, commanding the export trade.

As to madder, its growth cannot now be started at a profit, and it must die out. The effect of this is a very great injury to the agriculture of Asiatic Turkey. There, as in many Eastern countries, it is not the growth of corn which is the chief object, but that of high-priced products, which can bear the expense of freight to distant markets. An introduction of such a product is a source of wealth, its destruction means poverty. The injury to the Turkish peasants will, therefore, be very great; but there comes into view a larger matter, which touches us more.

The introduction into India of the improved cultivation of indigo is one of the great feats of Englishmen, and the indigo factories of Bengal are well known. This trade is a great resource of India. We have seen what has happened to madder culture by the production of artificial garancine, and we may look for a like doom for indigo in the substitution of artificial aniline for its

colouring matter. It has been shown by Baeyer that indigo can be produced artificially ; but at present no practical means are known to Mr. Perkin for carrying on the manufacture. There is every reason to believe that before many years this will be effected, and then, as he anticipates, the cultivation of the indigo plant will share the fate of madder. That means the annihilation of the value of indigo factories and estates in India, the displacement of their English owners and managers and native workmen, the cessation of the local consumption of the dye, and also the stoppage of freight for our shipping in conveying indigo to Europe. In return we shall get the smaller freight on the chemical, and we may or may not have the supply of it, as Germany or Belgium may supply a cheaper article. The compensation we shall get will be in the saving on the cost price of the dye for our own use. Thus we have to face another example of displacement of human industry on a large scale under the subtle influences of scientific investigation, theory mastering practice, mind overcoming matter.

In compensation one practical application of aniline is in the constitution of inks, which are the basis of the Polygraph, Myriograph, Lick-'em-all-graph, and the many new processes which enable the merchant to throw off forty or fifty or more copies of circulars.

Mr. Perkin's career presents not only an example of a man reaping a large reward for his inventions, but of his retiring early with an ample fortune. By 1873 the dye manufacture had made rapid strides, and capitalists interested in it were making enormous profits, even of many thousands a year for a single partner. Thus

the Messrs. Perkin had offers for the sale of their works, and in that year were able to make an advantageous arrangement.

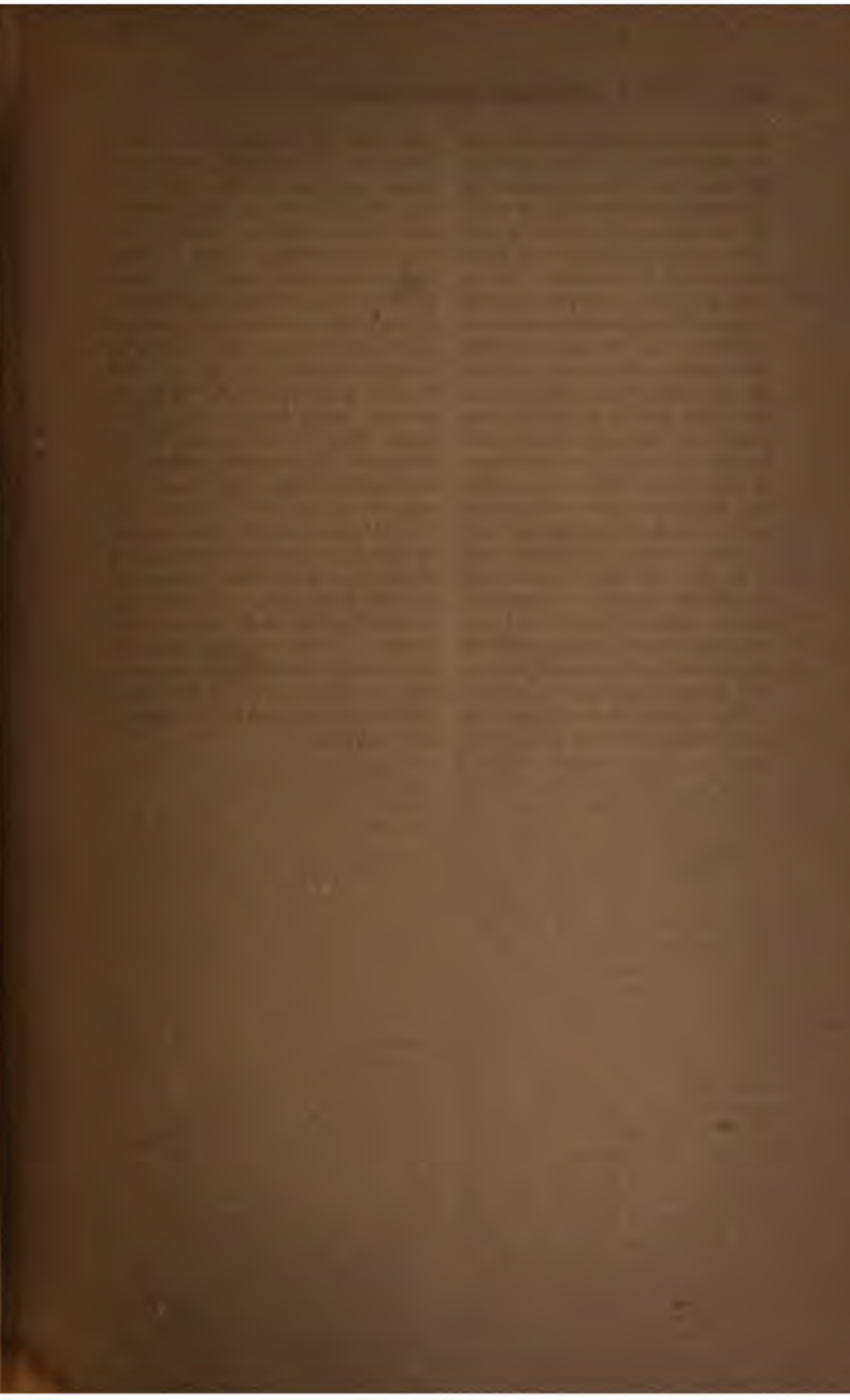
Nothing now remained but for Mr. Perkin to spend his life in ease, according to vulgar notions, doing no work, which some conceive must be the height of enjoyment, and laying out his money lavishly for his own amusement and ostentation. Some misuse great opportunities, and fortunes which might have been earned by hard and honest labour are so disposed of by the men, their wives, and children, as to be an injury rather than a benefit to society. Ostentation is a natural accompaniment of sudden and unexpected wealth, as also of wealth undeserved, when fraud has accompanied its accumulation. Palatial abodes, horticultural luxury pushed to extravagant limits, pictures bought not for the encouragement of art, but the indulgence of display, excite the adulation of the mob, the envy of the low, and the self-sufficiency of the owner. Several young men and women who might have led a life of honest industry are thrown on the world in idleness, and with abundant means for its gratification. Thus are stimulated influences which tend to the demoralisation of society. On the one side, persons without settled pursuits abandon themselves to reckless dissipation, or at the best to avowed indolence ; and while some sigh to enjoy their lot, others look with evil eyes on the ostentatious indulgence in ill-spent wealth. Whatever consideration is shown for the worker who has made his own way in the world, there is little for the men and women who are the creatures of fortune, and too often the revilers of labour and of merit.

To obtain a competence is in

England happily no uncommon reward of exertion, and is a valuable stimulus to the accumulation of national and individual wealth. Its enjoyment, however, is another matter, and that is what few achieve to the full. It is natural that a man should look to share his possessions with his children, but in apportioning these shares he is apt to leave out of consideration other heirs. No man's wealth is in this day wholly of his own production, but it is due to the advantages he has received from the community in which he has been brought up. Well-thinking men bear this in mind in their prosperity, and hence we see those useful and munificent institutions which do honour to their founder and our country. A man's responsibilities no more end with the acquisition of a fortune than does his life.

Mr. Perkin did not forget this, and in his retirement from busi-

ness, and while enjoying the property he has created, being a young man, has devoted himself as much as before to those scientific pursuits from which his fellow-countrymen may reap honour and advantage. He has likewise been a liberal contributor to funds for research. He has had no reason to regret the course he has pursued; while acquiring fresh titles to gratitude, he has already received many testimonies of respect. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society in virtue of his scientific attainments, and has received such tributes as that Society and the Chemical Society can award to him, the Royal Society having at their last anniversary bestowed a medal upon him. It is to be hoped that he will live many years to pursue a useful career; and should further pecuniary success attend his labours, it will add, not to his cares, but to his means of doing good.





LIGHT.

THE MYSTERY IN PALACE GARDENS.

BY MRS. J. H. RIDDELL.

CHAPTER VIII.

WAS IT CHANCE?

For considerably more than a month Mr. Hay remained absent from Stratford. It seemed, indeed, as though Doctor Dilton's hope was destined to be fulfilled, when suddenly once again he turned out of Angel-lane into the Broadway.

The season had changed; the scorching heats of summer were over for that year; the drenching showers of July no longer laid the carnations level with the ground; the days began to 'draw in,' and already there was a crisp autumnal feeling in the air.

The trees round about the Grove had donned russet hues, and to a fanciful observer their foliage seemed to shiver in anticipation of the coming equinoxes and the chill October weather.

Still it was a pleasant time. The days were sunshiny, though the nights might be cold; the roads and pavements were dry under foot; people had not yet begun to wear winter clothing; and the ladies shopping in the Broadway appeared in between-season dresses, which, while recognising the fact that summer had departed, did not rush in point of material to meet Father Christmas, who, whether accompanied by frost and snow, or mild open weather, always comes quite soon enough.

All along the Romford-road the stranger felt the influence of this change into autumn weather. The flowers that he before noticed in gardens by the wayside were dead and gone, and others, wel-

come, perhaps, but not so fair, were blooming in their stead. Dahlias had succeeded to roses, and nasturtiums were running wild over the faded carnations. The one thing which remained, and gave out its scent stronger and more welcome than ever, was mignonette. It perfumed the air; its odour mingled with the autumnal flavour, and rendered even that pleasant and mystical.

Mr. Hay walked on. Not a nice road now, the highway to Romford was only a degree more agreeable then. There were fewer funerals, and there was more country, but the country could not be considered beautiful; and when processions of mourning-coaches are constantly passing to a cemetery, it does not much matter whether there are fifty or a hundred per diem.

Mr. Hay did not like the road; from the first he had disliked it, but a power he could not define, an attraction he felt impotent to resist, had drawn him thither once again. He desired to know how it fared with Mr. Palthorpe; he wished to see for himself if Mrs. Palthorpe seemed happier than was the case on the summer's day when she spoke of their utter penury, and by implication contrasted her own position with those born Fortune's favourites.

He had been away for a long time, first abroad upon business, which detained him for a period quite beyond his expectations, and then almost constantly in Scotland with a dying grandfather, whose favourite he had been ever since

he was sent, a delicate child, to that picturesque manse situated amongst the hills, where the air was balmy with the perfume of wild thyme, and the scent of the pine forests was pleasantly pungent as it was wholesome; and now when at length he had some leisure it appeared as natural to him to turn his steps once again eastward, as though the people living there were his oldest friends.

And yet as he paced rapidly along there was a struggle going on within him. Some instinct warned him to turn back, bade him leave the Palthorpes, whether in weal or woe, unsought; but a stronger feeling impelled him to proceed, forced him unresisting to an end he might easily have avoided if he had ever looked fairly into his own heart, and not striven to delude himself with specious arguments and plausible excuses.

All the way he went he wondered whether he should find Mr. Palthorpe better or worse, living or dead; indeed, these questions had never for a day been quite forgotten. When he was abroad, when he was in Scotland, he kept constantly thinking of the sick man, of the flowers and the weeds in the little garden, of the quiet room where jasmine and roses peeped in at the windows; of Mrs. Palthorpe standing under the dark laurel-tree; of the morning when she called to him in the twilight, and he stood at the low gate looking at her, a white, ghostly, lonely figure, surrounded by the silence and the perfume and the solitude of night.

How would she appear to him? In perfect health, or worn with watching? in a dress such as he had last seen her wear, or clad in mourning?

It would have been easy for him

to write long before to Doctor Dilton, any one might have thought, and satisfy himself as to the state of that gentleman's patient, but he shrank from doing so. When he thought of the Palthorpes he felt as though they had been friends of his for years; but when he recalled the doctor's bitter words of warning, he remembered he had seen Mrs. Palthorpe but thrice, and her husband only once.

As he considered these things he walked a little faster. As some men drink deep to drown care, so he hurried his pace in order to stifle the warning voice which never remained quite silent.

In what case would he find them? He must soon know now; there, close before him, were the mean cottages, the little gardens, the shading trees, the Portuguese laurel. His heart throbbed quicker, and there was a look of eager expectancy on his face. He stepped forward rapidly, he put his hand over to lift the latch of the gate, and as he did so he raised his eyes, and saw that the house stood empty.

The curtains had disappeared from the upper windows, the shutters of the parlour were closed, the garden was a wilderness. They were gone. What could have happened? Had a change for the worse taken place? Was Mr. Palthorpe dead?

He remained leaning against the gate, looking stupidly at the house, in a sort of mute amaze, letting his glance wander over the neglected garden, till a woman living in the next cottage aroused his attention.

She spoke to him over the hedge, and asked if he wanted any one.

'Yes,' he answered, entering the garden and moving closer to where she stood. 'Is the gentleman—is Mr. Palthorpe dead?'

'Not that I know of; he was getting better when they left here.'

'When did they leave?'

'Three weeks since, or thereabouts. Once they got him out of bed, the hospital surgeon said he'd be better where there was not so many funerals passing (for my part I think they make the road lively and heartsome); and so when he could be moved they took him away.'

'Away where?'

'Out Epping part, getting on for Barkingside, I believe. I have never been there myself; but I am told it is a nice air, though for that matter the air hereabouts is good enough for anybody, I should have thought.'

'Do you know the name of the place to which they have gone?' asked Mr. Hay.

'I do not, sir. It is some farm, but I cannot tell you any nearer than that. The doctor could give you the direction, though,' she added, brightening up; 'he was wonderful good to them, was the doctor—always in and out, and rode over, so the nurse told me, the very afternoon they moved.'

'Thank you,' said Mr. Hay, slowly falling into a reverie even as he spoke.

'Is there anything more I can do for you, sir?' asked the woman. 'If you have come far, perhaps you would like to walk in and rest.'

Mr. Hay started, and answered, 'No, thank you; I have not come very far.'

Then he put half-a-crown in her hand, and, taking a last look around, passed out of the garden and closed the gate behind him.

'A real gentleman,' commented Mr. Palthorpe's late neighbour, contemplating the coin lying in her palm.

Once again westward towards London walked Mr. Hay; but this time he did not stride along

briskly; on the contrary, he pursued his way slowly and thoughtfully, with his head bent and his eyes paying but little heed to external objects.

He was debating within himself whether or not he should call at Doctor Dilton's. He did not want to go there, and yet he did wish to find out where the Palthorpes had removed. Should he decide to leave the Grove to his right, and let the sick man, now he was on the high-road to recovery, fade out of his memory? Should he go back to his office and his business, and never again see those people whose lives had crossed his so sharply, and aroused within him so unaccountable an interest?

He did not wish to become identified with them. The paths along which he had hitherto walked through existence had led him as far from Romance as Bohemianism, and he entertained about an equal dread of both on the morning when Doctor Dilton asked his name; and at the fear of even seeming to be mixed up with such an anachronism as a gentleman by birth and breeding lying stretched on a mean bed in a house fit only for the habitation of a porter or a mechanic, led him to suppress one very important addition to his name. He was ashamed of the interest he felt in the case, and he dreaded being chaffed about his 'adventure'; and possibly if he went to the doctor's, that gentleman might in some roundabout way discover his identity with the guest who had made one at Mrs. Marker's 'dance.'

The proprieties were strong within him: he had been brought up bound in their chains. As a child, as a boy, as a man, he had never even thought of overleaping those conventionalities which formed the rule of life with the

persons who surrounded him. As he had been taught so he believed; that which he had seen done was the course he elected to follow. No strong temptation coming in his way, he felt sure the ways of virtue were easy; no struggle ever taking place in his heart, he was confident that struggles never really took place in other hearts; that if a man went wrong, he chose his course of *malice prepense*, and selected the downward path out of the mere wantonness of sin.

Reared a Calvinist in morals and habits as well as in religion, he had no doubt whatever that his own ways and the ways of his own peculiar people were the only paths which could insure respectability and happiness in the passage through this world, and peace when the time came to depart from it.

Although to some extent his own views had in many respects been modified by the influence of the English opinions by which he was surrounded, yet it would not be going too far to say that the man was a Pharisee, and belonged to one of the strictest sects of that body.

His training had been strict and hard and inflexible, unburdened by troublesome thoughts about outside sinners and persons who lacked all backbone morally, and the perplexing human butterflies that it is so difficult to imagine are responsible creatures and possessed of souls at all. The laws laid down for his guidance were few, and, though never perhaps expressed in words, proved binding. First of all, a good man believed—that went without saying. He questioned nothing; he accepted what his Bible, as interpreted in the pages of the Westminster Confession, taught him without ever a thought of further inquiry. On this foundation other creeds,

likewise admitting of no dispute, were built. A good man honoured his father and his mother, was true to his wife, just to his children, fair in his dealings with his servants, paid his bills honestly, made money by strict attention to business and by neglecting to drive no bargain which could be driven without deviating from the strict line of rectitude. A good man would not go to a theatre; he would eschew frivolous society (ah! this good man ought not to have accepted Mrs. Marker's invitation); he would not consider beauty in marriage or think too much of a maiden because she was fair; he would be sober in his deportment and prudent in his speech. After such fashion had his people ever comported themselves. In his family there had been no 'wasters,' no 'profligates,' no daughters who brought shame on those connected with them; none of his kindred had aspired too high or sunk too low, or got into scrapes, or formed objectionable acquaintances, or entered into undesirable alliances. Men and women they had been careful to keep themselves to themselves; everything they did was weighed; all their actions could have been detailed without fear in a court of justice.

For the rest, if they had succeeded—as very possibly they would—the man who fell amongst thieves, before they committed themselves they would have wanted to know all about him. They were cautious, they valued their good name, they liked to think in their flock a black sheep had never been seen. They did not give themselves airs of superiority, it is true, because pride was sinful; but they did feel they were very good indeed, and it was not even in their human nature to abstain from a thrill of pleasure

when they considered that, spite of all their advantages, they were not puffed up.

No one could consider such a school the best possible in which to train a man who had more than his full share of kindness, more perhaps than a due complement of ready sympathy for his poorer fellow-creatures; and yet so far, Mr. Hay's education had stood him in sufficiently good stead.

In London there are always enough 'objects' which can be relieved through the agency of an obliging secretary. Nothing to do but send a cheque, or attend a meeting, or put down your name. Only find the money, and some philanthropist will kindly save you all trouble about seeing how it is expended. It is a sort of vicarious benevolence, which produces many thousands and millions of pounds in England, and manages to achieve remarkably little benefit after all.

Still a good sort of charity, and one quite safe for a man like Mr. Hay to practise. Better by far than running about the metropolis purchasing grapes and other delicacies for a total stranger. Safer and better and cheaper, as he found to his cost when, in the after days, he came to reckon up all that gift cost him.

How is it the French proverb goes? 'For the want of a nail the kingdom was lost.'

Well, in his case, as small a beginning produced as mighty an ending; for a man's life is of as much importance to him as a kingdom to a nation.

Should he go to the doctor's or not?

His impulses said 'yes,' his prudence said 'no.' It would not do for him to get mixed up personally with a man he might see at the end of a few months

sitting at a clerk's desk in the office of some acquaintance.

If the matter got talked about in the City he need never expect to hear the last of it—never.

There were people, he was aware, who could visit about amongst all sorts and conditions of men, and never be called upon to account for their conduct; but he was not one of them. Except at his grandfather's he had never gone into the houses of those below himself in station; and in that remote village of course everybody knew everybody. In London it was different. Already he had been perhaps foolish in this matter; but he need not go on being foolish. It was quite as well Mr. Palthorpe had removed. No, he would not call upon Doctor Dilton.

He arrived at this resolution and the Swan public-house simultaneously.

Here, to reach Angel-lane, it was necessary for him to cross the wide space in front of St. John's Church; and, as he did so, every event connected with the morning when he first beheld that building, standing out against the rising sun, rushed prominently into his mind: the white ghostly figure beneath the laurel-tree; the scent of the flowers, still heavy with the dews of night; the doctor's story; the sick man; the lovely lonely woman. He must think the matter over a little longer; he could not make up his mind just yet.

Unconsciously almost he turned along the Broadway as the most fitting place for his further reflections.

The pavement there is wide and even; rarely crowded, except on Saturday nights, when a stranger might imagine he was in the New Cut. In Angel-lane, on the contrary, Mr. Hay knew the side-path to be narrow and incon-

venient ; and from experience he was aware that, as a rule, the pedestrian had to choose between brushing the wall with his coat-sleeve, or being turned every minute off the kerb into the horse-road.

So he chose the Broadway as a suitable thoroughfare in which to reconsider the question. On the south side of St. John's Church he had decided not to go to Doctor Dilton's. On the north, and to him familiar, side it was more than possible he might come to a different conclusion.

As he proceeded along the outer edge of the pavement he passed a draper's shop.

The windows, large and handsome, were filled with goods suitable for the coming season—soft cashmeres, fine French merinoes, dyed in those rich brilliant colours then the fashion, but which, in later days, have given place to sad russet greens and autumnal-leaf yellows ; to browns that look as though gamboge were struggling with the more legitimate tint for mastery, and reds which seem to have been soaked for a long time in salt-water to tone their vivid hues down to the required shade of dull monotony.

Round these windows ladies, as was fit, congregated in large numbers ; and conspicuous amongst the jackets and mantles gathered to look at the stuffs, and silks, and velvets, and flannels, and furs, and cuffs, and cosy muffs, Mr. Hay's eye was caught by the flame of a bright scarlet shawl—a shawl worn scarf fashion over a black dress—drawn together by the wearer a little petulantly across the chest, and displaying even whilst it seemed to conceal the lines of a slight pliant figure, the droop of falling shoulders, the white purity of a delicately rounded throat.

It was she !

Though her back was turned towards him, though he had never seen her before in walking costume, Mr. Hay recognised her in a moment. Chance, Fate, his own will, that north side of St. John's Church, what you please, had solved the problem for this man who dreaded complications. Scarce three yards intervened between them. It was not likely he would adhere to his former resolution, and turn away from her now !

As he paused irresolute, watching her, yet not advancing to where she stood, Mrs. Palthorpe, having exhausted her curiosity, faced round, and in the act of doing so beheld her new acquaintance.

He took off his hat, and she came towards him from amongst the ladies, with a pleased smile on her lovely face, and yet shyly and diffidently, as though not knowing exactly how she ought to greet him in so public a place. If she had never known it before, she must have been taught her precise position in the social scale by old Mr. Palthorpe's will ; and she felt somewhat doubtful accordingly of how 'gentlefolks' would comport themselves when they met her where people congregate.

If anything of this sort influenced her—and no doubt it did—Mr. Hay's greeting must instantly have relieved her embarrassment.

The pleased expression of his countenance, his outstretched hand, his eager manner, could not instantly fail to dispel the timidity expressed by self-consciousness. What were all the ladies in the Broadway to him ? If the Queen had been there—the Queen surrounded by the princesses, and all the duchesses and marchionesses in the peerage, he would have been just as much delighted

to see her as was the case. Always supposing Mrs. Marker and Mrs. Marker's daughters absent, the presence of none of the female population of Essex made any difference to him; and he knew that his Upton hostess and the young ladies were still from home, because Mr. Marker had so informed him no later than the previous afternoon.

'I am delighted to have met you,' he said: contrary to wont, it was the man who broke the silence. 'How is Mr. Palthorpe?'

'Better; ever so much better, thank you,' she answered. 'We have moved from Stratford; but I suppose you know that. Have you been to the old house?'

In an instant his perplexity returned.

'Yes,' he replied slowly, 'I—I—was passing along the road—and—I called.'

'Are you going to Doctor Dil-ton's?'

'No; I was thinking of doing so; but it is unnecessary now.'

'You would not have found him, at any rate. He is away for his holiday. I should not much mind if he stayed away for ever.'

'You do not like him, Mrs. Palthorpe?'

'No; I don't like him at all,' she answered. 'The gentleman who is there now, and who they say will buy the practice, is much nicer.'

'But he did a great deal for your husband,' remarked Mr. Hay.

'Yes, I suppose so. Tom is always talking about his skill and his kindness; but, for my part, I think the hospital surgeon did more for him in one visit than Doctor Dil-ton in thirty.'

Again the vague sense of uneasiness, the feeling of a discord. There are instruments which, though perfectly and truly in

tune, jar upon the nerves of some amongst us; and, in like manner, there are sentences with which no actual fault can be found that offend our taste, though it is well-nigh impossible for us to say why or wherefore.

'Where are you living now, Mrs. Palthorpe?' he asked, the string she had touched all unwittingly still vibrating unpleasantly within him.

'O, near Wanstead. That was Doctor Dil-ton's doing, I am sure. Such an out-of-the-way place you never saw. If he wants anything extra, I have to come down and get it for him here. From week's end to week's end we never see a creature but the doctor and the people of the house. We are at a farm—Roding Farm; but it is best known as "The End of the World"—most fitting name for it too.'

'So lonely as that,' he observed.

'More lonely than you can imagine; why, my old home was lively in comparison, for there, at least, we did know all the neighbours roundabout; but here nobody seems to know anybody. Tom likes it, he says; but I am sure I don't.'

'Where should you like best to reside?' inquired Mr. Hay.

'In London, of course; there is always something to see there; but in such a place as this there is nothing to see, and there is nowhere to go. But I am keeping you, sir,' she added, with a sudden relapse into awkward shyness as she saw Mr. Hay's thoughts were wandering.

'No; O, no,' he answered abruptly, recovering himself. 'Are you going shopping now?'

'I have done my shopping,' she explained, holding up, as she spoke, a pretty fancy basket containing her small purchases. 'I

was on my way, when I met you, to the station to take the train to Leytonstone.'

'If you allow me I will walk with you so far,' he said; and as she made no objection to this—on the contrary, seemed pleased at the offer of companionship—he turned, and, side by side, they paced slowly along the Broadway.

When they reached Angel-lane he made a movement in that direction; but Mrs. Palthorpe remarking, 'There is a better way,' they walked on till they came to the next street, leading northward out of the main London-road.

'You are looking very well, Mrs. Palthorpe,' said Mr. Hay, as they quitted the direct thoroughfare, with its noise of vans and rumble of carts.

'I am quite well, thank you,' she answered, 'and I get plenty of sleep now: besides, a great piece of good luck has happened to us since I saw you last.'

'Indeed! I am very glad to hear it.'

'It was the most wonderful thing I ever knew,' she went on. 'About ten days after you brought those grapes—I have never been able to thank you for them before, sir, but I do now—I was sitting one morning, having a cup of tea, and thinking how in the world we were to go on without money, for aunt had written to say she could not spare any more for some time, when I saw the postman coming up the garden with a letter. I ran and took it from him—a blue ugly sort of letter: looked like rent, or taxes, or some trouble; so I turned it over and over, more than half afraid of what might be inside. I thought I would not open it, and then I thought I would, and then again I thought I would not. It was directed to Thomas Palthorpe, Esq.; and when I examined it

more closely I saw it bore the postmark of our county town.

'Well, I knew there could be nothing owing down there; so I opened the envelope, and took out the inside paper and unfolded it, and what do you suppose I saw?'

Looking into her eyes, uplifted to his—eyes now soft and earnest and without a trace of that evil fire lurking within their depths—Mr. Hay begged her to tell him.

'A bank-order for fifty pounds,' she said. 'Fifty pounds—just fancy! I sat down on the chair nearest the door, and looked at the paper stupidly. I could not tell what it meant or where it had come from. Just then the doctor walked in, without knocking, as he usually did, and found me, the draft spread out on my lap, staring at it with all my might.'

'What have you got there, Mrs. Palthorpe?' he asked—just as if what I had was any business of his. 'Some one left you a fortune, eh?'

'So I told him. I put the letter and order in his hands.'

'I can't imagine who has sent it,' I said.

'He held up the envelope between him and the light, and putting in his finger drew out a mere slip of paper, on which was this writing. He read it aloud:

"From a Friend, who is sorry to hear of T. P.'s accident."

'Who is that likely to be?' he asked. 'Can you guess, Mrs. Palthorpe?'

'I told him I could not; that I did not know Tom had a friend in the world able to send him fifty shillings, to say nothing of fifty pounds.'

'He was surprised to hear you say so, I suppose,' remarked Mr. Hay.

'I do not know whether he was or not. I think not; at any rate, he

took no notice of the remark, but put his hands deep in his pockets, walked over to the window, and said, "Phew!" I never can tell what to make of him, I can't indeed.

'After a minute he came back to where I sat, and, stretching out his hand, said:

"Will you trust this to me for a minute, Mrs. Palthorpe? Wherever this order comes from, or whoever has sent it, I fancy it will do more for your husband than all my medicine."

'Where are we going?' suddenly asked Mr. Hay, at this juncture, as he perceived they were directing their steps towards the part-cellar, part-tunnel, part-cavern, through the gloomy shades and fearfully suggestive depths of which passengers, dwelling in that part of Stratford, were wont to make their exit and ingress from and to the station. 'What is this dreadful place we are coming to?'

'Only a passage under the railway,' she answered, laughing. 'I suppose you never are out our way—Wanstead way, I mean?'

'I never have been,' he replied; 'but if you think my visit would not harm Mr. Palthorpe, I should like greatly to call and see him.'

'He often speaks of you,' she answered. 'Being so ill, you might fancy he could not have remembered about your lifting him up that morning; but he does. He says he wanted to thank you, but the doctor hurried you away. And about the fruit, too. I thought he would be vexed, perhaps; but he was not. He did enjoy it so much. He was tired of beef-tea and milk and slops of all sorts. He told Doctor Dilton your friend must have a beautiful garden, for the grapes tasted as if grown in paradise. When he wandered after that, he

always talked of being among flowers and beside cool waters.'

They were at the station by this time; they had emerged from the tunnel, and were close to that grimy building, which looked as though the smoke from every engine on the then Eastern Counties line had been specially employed to embellish it.

'That is my way,' said Mrs. Palthorpe, pointing to another dark passage leading to dreary stairs, which conducted passengers to the departure platform of the Cambridge trains, and also of those proceeding by the branch to Loughton and intermediate stations.

He hesitated a moment, half disposed to accompany her to Wanstead then and there, and made a step in the direction she indicated.

'I do not think they will allow you to go up, as you have not a ticket,' she remarked, mistaking the purpose he had in his mind.

That decided him. He remembered instantly it would be intrusive on his part thus to force his presence on the invalid, and that besides he could not with any propriety go travelling about on railways in the society of so young and pretty a woman as Mrs. Palthorpe.

A beautiful woman, indeed, she looked, standing even in the dark dingy hall—a lovely bit of colour, with that bright shawl wrapped round her, her eyes sparkling, her cheeks flushed with exercise.

'Far too handsome,' Doctor Dilton had said, and said truly.

'Yes,' he thought, looking at her with another revulsion of prudence succeeding to the impulse that urged him to make his way to Roding Farm, 'far too handsome for any man to be wandering about with.'

Beauty, there can be no doubt, often serves for a danger-signal, which would prove of more use than it is if people did not elect to blind their eyes to the red light and run past the warning displayed, to meet with disaster a little further down the line of life.

'I will bid you good-bye, then, for the present, Mrs. Palthorpe,' said Mr. Hay, holding her hand as he spoke these words. 'I hope very soon I shall be able to get out as far as Wanstead.'

'A neighbourhood with which you would be delighted,' he remembered Doctor Dilton remarked, as they wended their way side by side along the Romford-road.

Well, he would soon have an opportunity of forming an opinion on the point for himself.

'After all,' he thought, 'it is a shame to have lived so long a time in London, and never seen the Forest lying close to it.'

CHAPTER IX.

LIGHT.

WHEN Doctor Dilton returned from his holiday, he found Mr. Hay established as a friend of the Palthorpes. He came and went at will; was regarded by the farmer and his family in the light of their lodgers' relative; had made himself popular amongst the labourers and servants, and quite won the heart of the man slowly and wearily crawling back to health.

He rarely came to the farm empty-handed—a book, a few flowers—something always of the most trifling value, but sufficient to prove the invalid had been in his thoughts—game occasionally, fruit on rare occasions. The doctor

looked on perplexed. His own interest in Mr. Palthorpe he could understand; but Mr. Hay's interest baffled him. If that gentleman had succeeded in patching up a shattered body in a most truly remarkable manner, piecing the broken fragments together as the Portland Vase at the British Museum is mosaicked and dovetailed, so as to present externally an exact similitude of itself as it appeared before it was smashed to atoms, no amount of enthusiasm would have surprised him.

Further, had Mr. Hay been a more impulsive gentleman, one less stiff in his manners and not so strait-laced in his ideas, he could better have understood the charm he seemed to find in Mr. Palthorpe's simple nature and boyish blue eyes.

'He can't be coming after the wife,' thought the doctor, puzzled and curious. 'He isn't a bad designing man, I'd stake my life; and as for her, if he wants to get at her heart, he is not taking the right way to touch it. She does not care a straw about him. Bless my soul, if she disliked me a shade less cordially, I'd say she cared no more for him than she does for myself; but perhaps that would be going too far. Well, it is not my business, thank Heaven. I said all I am ever going to say in the way of warning to Hay long ago; and as for Palthorpe himself, I would not jeopardise his recovery for the sake of a hundred wives. I used to imagine Hay sent that fifty pounds; I don't think so now. Besides, they had another twenty-five this morning from some outlandish place in Cornwall, directed in the same handwriting as the other. I wish somebody would send me a few letters of that sort,' and he rode slowly down a road bordered on one side by part of the old Forest,

till he came to the Flats, where he put his horse to its speed and galloped across the turf, beside hollows where the summer ferns were dead or dying, past hillocks where there was scarcely a blackberry left for the gipsy children to gather.

The next day was Sunday. Contrary to his wont, between two and three o'clock Mr. Hay appeared at Roding Farm.

He apologised for what he called his intrusion by explaining he would have to leave town the following morning, and feared he might not be able to come out again to Wanstead for a fortnight at least.

'Before I went away,' he added, 'I wanted to see for myself that you were still improving, and also to ask if there was anything I could do for you.'

Mr. Palthorpe smiled, and from his easy-chair stretched out a weak white hand of greeting.

'Always welcome,' he answered, 'but especially welcome to-day. I have something to tell and something to ask you. The same kind friend whose generosity so materially assisted my recovery has sent another gift. Mira, show Mr. Hay the letter. Now, I can't bear to take his presents and never make an effort to say "Thank you" for them, and therefore I want you, please, kindly to write me out an advertisement and insert it in the *Times*, saying how grateful I am, and how much I wish he would let me tell him so in person.'

'If you consider it necessary; but do you not think that had he desired an acknowledgment of any kind he would have given you some opportunity of making it?'

'He might, certainly; but then, on the other hand, if I show no sign, how is he to know his letters have ever reached me?'

'I observe this one is registered,' answered Mr. Hay.

'Yes; and addressed to Roding Farm. Now, that strikes me as very curious.'

Mr. Hay did not instantly reply. He looked up from the letter which he held in his hand, and, in the momentary act of lifting his eyes, happened to catch Mrs. Palthorpe's gaze, which was fixed upon his face.

Suddenly the envelope fluttered from his hand, and while he stooped to take it from the carpet he answered,

'Some of your relations are, I suppose, acquainted with your present address.'

'Of course they are,' said Mr. Palthorpe, at once accepting this natural explanation of the difficulty. 'I never thought of that. You must ask your aunt, Mira, if she has given the direction to any one about Ravensmede.'

'But don't you think,' persisted Mr. Hay, keeping his eyes resolutely averted from Mrs. Palthorpe, and addressing himself to the husband alone, 'that the very mode your friend has chosen of offering assistance implies a desire for secrecy to be observed concerning it?'

'O, that would be quite impossible,' answered Mr. Palthorpe hastily. 'I could not receive such gifts and say nothing about them. Directly the former letter came my wife wrote to her aunt and told her; the doctor saw the order almost the moment it came, and then we knew you would be glad to hear of our good fortune.'

Mr. Hay smiled.

'When good fortune comes to you, Mr. Palthorpe,' he said, 'you are certainly not tardy in telling your friends the news. Most persons feel more inclined to speak of the blessings they lack than of those they receive.'

'Ah, but that is not right,' returned the other simply. 'I do not know how any one could keep silence, for instance, about such a kindness as this. I would give anything to know who thought of me and cared for me when I was stricken down.'

'There is this advantage about not knowing,' answered Mr. Hay, 'that in your heart you really thank fifty people instead of one. Fifty people you know might have sent such a remembrance.'

'Well, no, say half a dozen, though I am sure I did not think there was any person in all the wide world who would have done as much for me. How I should like to know which of my former friends this comes from!' and he touched the letter Mr. Hay had returned to him. 'I can't imagine why he will not sign his name.'

'Perhaps from his knowledge of you he fears you might return the money.'

Mr. Palthorpe shook his head.

'I should not do that,' he said. 'On the morning of the day I met with this accident,' and he laid his hand on his breast suggestively, 'I am afraid I should have said I would rather die or starve than accept such a favour from any man, but I should not say so now. When one comes to want a crust, it makes one thankful for a whole loaf sent in the very nick of time; when one comes to look death straight in the face, one feels the pride we think so much of in this world is a very poor sort of thing after all. No; I should not refuse help now even from an enemy, and I do not think I have an enemy on earth.'

There came a softened, sympathetic look into Mr. Hay's grave face.

'I will put the advertisement if you wish in the *Times* with pleasure,' he said; and then turning

to Mrs. Palthorpe, who was in her walking-dress, he went on: 'I see you were going out. Pray do not let me detain you. If my being here would not disturb Mr. Palthorpe I should like to keep him company for half an hour.'

Very eagerly Mr. Palthorpe said nothing could give him so much pleasure.

'I always feel better after talking to you,' he added. 'Go, Mira dear,' he continued, turning towards his wife, 'or else you will be very late. You will walk to Leytonstone, will you not?'

No; Mrs. Palthorpe thought it possible she might choose some nearer church. 'It is so dull,' she explained, 'coming back alone.'

'So it is,' agreed her husband quickly; 'but I am making all the haste I can to get well, dear, and then I shall be able to go with you.'

At which prospect Mrs. Palthorpe did not seem so much delighted as might have been the case before they were married. Instead of expressing any pleasure at the hope suggested, she gave her head a little impatient toss, and without further leave-taking walked to the door Mr. Hay held open for her.

'I suppose I shall find you here when I come back,' she said, when she got out into the little passage.

'I fear not,' he answered. 'I want to be back in London early. I have an appointment.'

She looked vexed, he thought, but she made no remark—only went her way down the gravel walk leading between the prim grass-plots to the gate. There she nodded good-bye, a thing Mr. Hay had never known her do before, and smiled—an attention as rare as delicate on Mrs. Palthorpe's part.

Pleasant looks were quite as scant with her as pleasant words, and none except those who lived

with her constantly could imagine what a very small amount of agreeable conversation she vouchsafed to any one in the course of a year.

'I am so glad when I can induce her to go out,' said Mr. Palthorpe to his visitor, as he resumed his seat: 'it is almost impossible to get her to leave me, and her health will suffer if she remains so much indoors. She was so constantly in the open air at her grandfather's, that the change to such a sedentary life must be all the more hurtful.'

'When a woman is devoted to her husband it is difficult to make her think of herself,' answered Mr. Hay tentatively. He had long desired to get this man to talk about his wife, and now the opportunity seemed presented for inveigling Mr. Palthorpe to enlarge upon the subject.

The young man turned his face towards the fire, and looked at the blaze thoughtfully.

'Yes,' he said meditatively, 'yes.'

True, it was only a general proposition to which he thus gave assent; but yet he seemed to consider the particular application which might be included somewhat doubtful.

'It has been very hard for her, very hard,' he proceeded after a moment's pause, narrowing the subject to the lady who had just left them.

'It has been very hard for you, I think,' supplemented his companion.

'O, you mean this illness. I was not thinking so much of that as of the whole position. I was wrong to marry as I did, Mr. Hay. I had no right to ask her to run counter to the wishes of both our families. You see I had nothing. I took her from a home where she never knew what it was to

lack every comfort, and you have seen for yourself all I could give her. I ought to have thought a long time before I allowed any woman to make such a sacrifice for me; but I was selfish and I was foolish. I had never known poverty or shortness of money myself. I never believed my uncle would cast me off utterly, and I did believe I could conquer the world. Well, you perceive what has happened.'

And he held up his wasted hand to screen his face from the glare of the fire, and perhaps also to prevent the leaping flame showing what was written upon it.

Mr. Hay remained silent for a minute; then he said:

'I suppose you do not mean that if you had to live the time over again—the last two years, say—you would not marry?'

'That is precisely what I do mean,' was the answer. 'I ought not to have tempted a young girl to leave a comfortable home for such a future as I could offer her. Of course I thought then I could give her a very different position; but thoughts are one thing and certainties are another.'

'What her grandfather said to me was: "Go to your uncle, and if he gives his consent I will give mine; only don't let there be any fooling about the matter."'

'Straightforward, at any rate,' remarked Mr. Hay.

'Yes, but I was not straightforward. I married her without the consent of anybody, and I had not a sixpence I could call my own. I had been brought up to no profession, I understood no trade. Let me work my hardest, I knew I never was worth the thirty shillings a week my friend's interest procured for me in London. And now I suppose I could not get that again; my friend is in China, my place is filled up,

and I am—well, I never was of much use, but I shall be of less use for the future.’

‘You must not talk in that way, Mr. Palthorpe,’ said his visitor, with an affectation of cheerfulness he was far from feeling. ‘I am not a rich man or an influential; but I think I could prove of use in this matter. We must, somehow, manage to get you a larger salary than thirty shillings a week.’

‘I should be thankful to feel I was earning that,’ was the reply. ‘We could manage very well indeed with seventy or eighty pounds a year. We don’t want much, and we could live in town; Mira would like that better. It was my foolish fancy taking that little house at Stratford. I thought I should prefer a place of my own, and I imagined she would miss the flowers if she was cooped up in London; but she says she would rather be in apartments, and they might be got more cheaply, you know. If you could help me to obtain a situation, Mr. Hay, after a little, when I can move about better, I would try to do credit to your recommendation. I don’t care what it is, I do not mind how long the hours are; I would work faithfully. I have not much, indeed any, business talent, I know; but—’

‘How would you like a farm, Mr. Palthorpe?’ interrupted Mr. Hay.

‘That requires capital, and I have no capital.’

‘True,’ said the other thoughtfully.

‘At every turn I have been to blame,’ confessed Mr. Palthorpe, with the humility which never comes till a man feels he has met with total worldly shipwreck. ‘Old Mr. Aggles offered, after my uncle’s death, to let us live at the farm if I would help him with the accounts, and so forth; but I

felt I must get away. It was only pride made me refuse his offer; the worst form of pride. I did not think I could endure to be spoken of as “young Palthorpe” when I had been called the young Squire. When I look back I could laugh, if I did not feel more inclined to cry, only to think of the notions I had when I came to London. I was to make a fortune at once. I had dreams of buying back the old place. I never saw a beautiful dress in the drapers’ windows I did not intend to get for Mira when I had money enough. Ah, London soon takes the nonsense out of people. At first I thought it strange every one I came in contact with did not recognise I was not a mere clerk, but Palthorpe of Ravelsmade Hall; and now, do you know, I find it very difficult to realise I ever had an uncle, ever was looked upon as his heir, ever went to college, ever was one of the idlest dogs on earth.’

‘I thought that Ravelsmade Hall was left to some charity.’

‘Yes; the will directed it should be sold, and the proceeds devoted to building and endowing a hospital in the county town. Perhaps my uncle had some sort of foreboding I should soon be the better for a bed in it myself. A Mr. Roberts bought the estate, and has, I hear, laid out a lot of money upon the house.’

‘Was it an old place?’ asked Mr. Hay.

If he had started a fox, Mr. Palthorpe could not, in his hunting-days, have been off quicker after it than he began running along the offered scent.

With his blue eyes shining, and his handsome young face—handsome still, though so worn with sickness and drawn with pain—turned towards the listener, he described the only home he

had ever really known; photographed it for the benefit of the man who listened with head bent down, and a mind which took in far more than the inanimate details of the picture presented.

'Not a very large house, but comfortable; built of dark stone, rendered darker by the action of the wind and the weather. An old house, such as you often see depicted in Christmas Annuals,' explained Mr. Palthorpe, 'with terrace-walks and stiff yew-hedges, and broad stone steps leading down to the prim flower-garden.' And beyond the gardens and shrubberies lay what had once been the deer-park; but his uncle did not keep any. One way or another the estate had been shorn of many a broad acre, and the family stripped of a goodly portion of their revenue; but enough remained to maintain the house and grounds in good order, and to preserve a certain state when the owner received and entertained his friends.

The house stood on the side of a hill, and the woods rose behind it, forming a background of tossing boughs and waving branches; from the top of the hill you could catch a glimpse of the Isle of Wight, and the sea glittering away in the distance, and the ships like great white birds flitting by with silent wings; and then down on the other side, through the woods and fields beyond, there ran a path which led to the farmhouse, where the young fellow met his fate.

'I had known her all my life,' he said, 'or at least all her life; for she is three years younger than I am. When I was a little boy we used to go nutting and black-berrying together; but once after I was grown up, when I returned after having been away for nearly twelve months, I de-

clare I did not know her in the least.

'She had shot up into a woman all in a minute, I thought. I am sure I could not tell what I thought when I saw her. She was standing in her grandfather's orchard, and she had put some apple-blossoms in her hair; and she wore a light-blue muslin dress, and she was looking up at the white clouds sailing overhead, and singing a tender song softly to herself. And O, Mr. Hay, you who have only seen her battling with poverty, and tried with my illness, and worn with anxiety and want of rest, cannot imagine what she seemed to me, as I came upon her suddenly, and yet so softly, out of the coppice, and over the turf of the paddock, that she did not know I was standing near, till she happened to turn and saw me.'

He stopped in his rapid utterance, and lifted his head, which he had been leaning back against the chair.

The fire was burning somewhat dim, and the winter twilight gathering coldly around. Mr. Hay neither moved nor spoke.

'When I think of it,' went on Mr. Palthorpe, and there was a suspicion of tears in his broken troubled voice, 'when I think of it, when I remember that day—and I never shall forget it—and think how she looked to me no whit less fair than an angel from heaven, and consider the trouble I have brought upon her, the way in which I have spoiled her whole life, I feel as though it is all more than I can bear, as if some day I should do something desperate.'

Mr. Hay rose, and going to a chiffonier where wine was kept, poured out a glass and held it to the sick man's lips.

'You are overwrought,' he said, 'and take distorted views. When

you are strong again these fancies will fade away. They have no more foundation in reality than the phantoms that troubled you in your delirium. I can help you on in the world a little, I am sure; I know so many business people. Do not harass yourself about the future; something good will be offered to you.'

They sat and talked for a little time longer; and when Mr. Palthorpe was more composed his visitor rang for the servant, and asking her to make up the fire, himself lit the lamp, and, drawing down the blinds and arranging the curtains, shut out the sad gray twilight.

'I must go now,' he said, taking the weak white hand in his; 'but before I go I want you to promise me not to indulge in thoughts of the past. You have a long fair future before you, please God, and I will try and help you to make a good thing of it.'

'I am not often so foolish,' answered the sick man, with a wan smile. 'I can't think what made me break down just now.'

Perhaps not; but Mr. Hay could form an idea, and after he had left the room the lines in his

face set and hardened, and he strode in hot haste away from the house, as though he were trying to shake off something which would not be left behind.

Turning out of the lane which led to Roding Farm he soon found himself at a point where two roads met—one led straight down to the Flats, the other to Leytonstone.

For a moment he hesitated—only a second; then saying, 'No; I won't go that way,' he chose the former route, and plunged among the shadows of the trees.

Before he reached the wide stretch of common-land lying between Forest Gate and Ilford he again changed his course. Entering the Lower Forest, as it was then called, he made his way into one of those magnificent avenues which are the glory of that part of Epping, and walked on in the solemn silence, conversing bitterly with his own heart.

For that afternoon he had learned something which no casuistry could gainsay. He knew he loved the woman madly, senselessly, sinfully.

And he knew more than this also,—that he had loved her from the first!

THE WEAVERS' GARDEN :

A London Study.

'By coach to Bednall Green, to Sir W. Rider's to dinner. A fine merry walk with the ladies alone after dinner to the garden; the greatest quantity of strawberries I ever saw, and good. This very house was built by the blind beggar of Bednall Green, so much talked of and sung in ballads; but they say it was only some of the outhouses of it.'

So wrote old Pepys in his diary for the 26th of June 1663; and the record should be suggestive to all those who acknowledge nothing eastward beyond Threadneedle-street, and have been accustomed to regard Bethnal as a mere sordid fringe of poverty and misery, without a history, and with all greenness, except that of decay, withered and blighted ages ago.

It may be hopeless to attempt to restore the legendary and titular reputation of this forlorn and despised locality, and it is doubtless impossible to reinstate it in the respectful recognition of London society; but the memorials of the district were once noble and even royal what time Queen Elizabeth went hunting in Epping Forest, and lived in the quaint old lodge that still stands at Chingford.

Bednall—was Strype right in thinking that it should have been Bathon Hall, from the great family of Bathonia, who had wide lands at Stepney?—was ancient even then; for, apart from the ballad of the 'siely blind beggar,' the father of 'pretty Bessee,' and by popular myth represented as the

son of Simon de Montfort, have we not deeds and documents by the cartful, setting forth the holdings of the Knights Hospitallers at Hackney or the King's Hold? and were not the manor and mansion of Sir John de Shore-ditch, that doughty warrior in the reign of Edward III., places of note? Let us give Bethnal Green its due of the past, even if we choose to ignore its present claims. While Pepys was writing his diary it was the abode of a goodly number of gentlemen; for the adjoining village of Hackenay was of high repute when the Merry Monarch was wont to dine at the Black and White House with Lord Mayor Vyner, the jovial chief magistrate who held his Majesty fast when he wished to escape from a banquet at Guildhall, and swore he should stay to 'finish t'other bottle.'

But while Pepys was writing those *bric-à-brac* chronicles, which give a piquant flavour to the history of a corrupt reign, events were happening in France which were to make a new era in the village of Bednall Green. A great invading French army was about to send contingent after contingent to England, driven from their homes by the persecutions which followed the revocation of the Edict of Nantes; and in the suburb of St. Mary Spittle, afterwards known as the Spital Fields, a small colony had already established itself on the borders of those pleasaunces and gardens where gallants had walked so merrily with the ladies to eat

strawberries and idle away the summer afternoons. The persecutions of the Protestants—abated for a time by the Edict of Nantes and the false promises of Louis XIV. after the siege of Rochelle—had grown to a fury for exterminating 'the new religion.' The Huguenots who remained in France were hunted like wild beasts; those who attempted to escape and failed had their property confiscated, were tortured, and were sentenced to perpetual imprisonment in the galleys. Yet six hundred thousand persons contrived to leave the country in fishing-boats; in the holds of coasting-vessels; concealed amidst bales of merchandise; disguised as sailors, mendicants, footmen, couriers, and even packed in cases or baskets.

Numbers of the earlier refugees were non-resistants, not because they were afraid, but because they believed it unlawful to resort to carnal weapons. They had endured the loss of all their worldly goods, the burning of houses, separation from wives and children, who were carried to prison in distant departments, hunger, poverty, and misery, rather than forswear their faith. Hundreds of their friends, men and women, had been tortured, mutilated, racked, and subjected to the fierce brutalities of regiments of dragoons, who were taught that they were doing the Church and the throne loyal service by holding a carnival of slaughter. The pastors refused to leave the districts, and travelled about, famished but resolute, to visit the congregations of their brethren who met 'in the desert,' the wilderness of woods and ravines in the Cevennes and Lozère. It was not till four years after the siege of Rochelle, when the persecutors, mad with untinted cruelty and repeated per-

jury, decreed the extermination of the Vaudois, that any regular attempt was made to resort to an armed defence. The leaders knew well how to fight. Witness the battle of the Boyne, when the mercenaries who followed James found opposed to them a hedge of French steel, and, as the swords of their countrymen flashed in their eyes, heard the terrible cry for vengeance which came from the Huguenots who went in the English ranks with William of Orange. It was by men like these that the bands of peasants who came down from their huts were led when the war of the Camisards commenced. It was a war against wild beasts by hunted creatures at bay. Suffering had done its work in a strange and awful fashion; for the peasants who lived on chestnuts and slept in caves and on hill-sides were themselves seized with a frenzy of fanaticism; and on a certain Sunday in July 1702 a band of fifty men, incited by a mystic preacher named Séguier, who, with scores of others, claimed to be inspired, broke into the house of a priest who had invented special tortures for the Protestants, and kept several of them imprisoned in the dungeons beneath the building. The house was fired, the prisoners released, and the priest slain while attempting to escape. The success of this desperate act aroused the whole district, and a war of retaliation became a war of insurrection. Séguier was captured, tortured, and burnt alive; but others were ready to take his place. The leaders of the Protestants in the Cevennes alone were able to control the disorganised bands of fanatics by converting them into a regular army. Roland and Cavalier put themselves at the head of a number of men in that

district, and with extraordinary ability trained and commanded the insurgents, made reprisals on the enemy by seizing arms and provisions, and maintained the war with varying success, until their defeat was accomplished under a new *régime*, while France itself was trembling with the first rumble of the revolutionary earthquake; and Voltaire, hating religion, which he thought was the same thing as hating the persecuting Church, had just concluded his exertions to deliver some of the martyrs to the Protestant faith.

All this time, however—from 1687 to 1706—enormous numbers of emigrants were escaping the spies and seeking a refuge in Holland, Switzerland, Flanders, Germany, and England. Of these there were 30,000 men who had been trained as soldiers and sailors; and while the larger proportion of their numbers went to serve in the Low Countries, eleven regiments were formed in the English army from French Protestant *émigrés* alone. Two years after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, 15,500 of the refugees had arrived in this country, and it was then that the true history of Bethnal Green began; for it was in that neighbourhood that they formed a community, which, like those of their brethren in Norwich and Canterbury, soon began to prosper by frugal industry, and the exercise of the handicrafts which added new and profitable industries to England. In Shoreditch, Spitalfields, Bethnal Green, they set up their looms and established dye-houses; and when Chamberlain wrote his Survey of London in 1768 there were about twenty French Protestant churches and chapels; the greater number of them being in this district, while above 13,000 emi-

grants had settled in or near the metropolis. The one French Protestant church founded by Edward VI. was, of course, inadequate to receive them; and as they reached London penniless, and had no other resources than their skill and industry, a collection, amounting to 60,000*l.*, was made for their immediate relief. This sum was afterwards increased to 200,000*l.*, and was called the Royal Bounty; for no other obvious reason than that royalty had nothing to do with it at that time, except the permission to apply the money to the proper object may be regarded as a royal concession. In 1686-7 about 6000 persons were relieved, and in 1688 27,000 persons received assistance; while others were relieved by those *émigrés* who had not lost the whole of their possessions, or had so prospered as to be able to find employment for their compatriots. Whatever may have been the proportion of the money subscribed by English people, it was a profitable investment for London. The refugees, peaceable, law-abiding, devout, thrifty, temperate, and mostly of refined and educated tastes, introduced new branches of trade, which, for many years, held a prominent place in the industrial resources of the country; while they and their sons aided in increasing the ranks of our army, in manning our navy, and in teaching in our schools.

Even the least educated of these people were for the most part gentle and courteous, serious, and yet gay with a childlike pleasantry, and had those simple tastes which gave to their colony a peculiarity entirely its own. In Spitalfields the long rows of houses, where the upper stories were lighted by long leaden casements that they might be better

fitted for the work, which requires accuracy of sight and touch, and the complete distinction of colours, had a somewhat gloomy aspect; but the rooms themselves frequently showed tokens not only of artistic appreciation, but of the former condition of those who dwelt in them. The ornaments, the furniture, the arrangement of the few poor household treasures, the flotsam and jetsam rescued from seizure by them or their fathers, proclaimed 'something above the common.' A piece or two of old china, a *pot-pourri* of Nankin blue (which would be priceless to a modern china-maniac) hanging against the wall, filled with dried lavender, rose-leaves, and sweet herbs, a curious picture, a rare print, an antique box or cabinet containing a few strips of 'point' lace, a watch of portentous mechanism, with quaintly cut watch-papers or an embroidered pad to protect the inner from the outer case, a snuff-box, a pair of high-heeled satin shoes of the true Watteau pattern, and almost inevitably a fiddle or a flute, with a few books of gavottes, airs, or concertos,—either or any of these things might be seen in the house of the *émigré* weaver, while his liking for birds and flowers was proverbial. Indeed, the collection of birds in Spitalfields was something remarkable, and doubtless led in later and degenerate times to the establishment of that bird and pigeon fair in 'Club-row,'—a thing few people will remember except as a Sunday-morning exhibition which attracted the modern black-guardism of Whitechapel, and had to be put down in the interests of decency and order. But this love for birds and flowers found more favourable expression in the open district of Bethnal Green, where within living memory there were

sundry rows of cottages in which the whirr of the wheel blended with the notes of tiny songsters stirred to emulation by the swift shrilling of the shuttle, and where to every weaver's cottage there was a weaver's garden. In later days some of the denizens of Spitalfields, descendants of the 'old French folk,' rented plots of garden-ground near some of the open spaces once devoted to the pleasure-lawns of those historical mansions which began to disappear because of the demand for small houses, and the desertion of Bednall by more aristocratic tenants. The garden was a holiday resort for summer evenings, and had its summer-house well furnished with handy lockers for bottled porter, seeds, and tools. When the weaver was 'at play'—a suggestive euphonym which meant that he had taken home one piece of woven silk, and was waiting for another web from the master—a longer holiday was made to Temple Mills, that ancient resort on the Hackney Marshes, where some semi-royal personage once employed the mills for making pieces of ordnance; or to the White House, where roach, dace, and perch rewarded the skilful angler; or to High Hill Ferry, where Leander could disport himself in a trim-built wherry. At Temple Mills a patriarchal tree was converted into an arboreal dining-room, by means of a step-ladder leading to a floored space between the mighty forks, large enough to hold a table and seats for half a dozen revellers on shrimps and mildale. This tree was—nay, *is*—the delight of children of all growths,—for it is there yet—with the mills and the Ferry, and, far less altered than these, the great expanse of marshland, which in an autumn evening seems to stretch, as indeed it does, in one vast expanse of dense lush pas.

ture and intervening pollard-bordered stream to the Essex wealds, and so, straight as the crow flies, to the sea moaning on the coast. On a prime evening, when there is a gorgeous heavenly landscape in the sky, seen from the long grass, on which one can crouch and gaze upward at the marvellous changes of snow-capped cliff and ruddy shore to mountains of opal and sands of gold, that remind us of Raleigh's hymn, or song, beginning,

'O, for a scallop-shell of quiet,
A staff of faith to lean upon !'

there are few places like these Hackney Marshes, just a stroll from 'that horrid neighbourhood' of Bethnal Green. As the cloud mountains turn to flocks of golden-fleeced sheep moving away into the vast, to let us see a great serried crag all edged with fire, we can feel the breeze freshen, while we say after Coleridge,

'The stars rush out ;
At one stride comes the dark,'

and can feel the breath of the sea come straight across the slate blue, and touch our hair with the faintest trace of brine. All this is there yet, but the weavers' gardens are no more to be seen in Bethnal. Those little quaint plots, with borders edged with pearl-lipped oyster-shells and bits of bright glass and tile,—what a wealth of bloom the old Huguenot weavers contrived to make them ! It would go hard if they did not yield a salad or a bunch of pot-herbs and a cabbage or two, as well as ten-week stocks, sweet-williams, jonquils, marigolds (for broth as well as borders), and clove-pinks and gillyflowers ; while basil, marjoram, and sweet thyme scented the house, along with the faint odour of marsh-mallow, colts-foot, eyebright, and other field herbs set by for diet-drinks and *tisanes*.

Well, they have vanished, vanished with the descendants of the *émigrés*, most of whom have merged even their names, which have become Anglicised, and many of the good old customs, which it would have been well to Anglicise too, by maintaining them. What was to be expected when not only the colony, but the industry which it represented, dwindled, and almost disappeared from Bethnal Green ? Weaving in London has died the death of an industry superseded by the natural advantages possessed by foreign competitors who have not yet been converted to 'Reciprocity,' much less to Free-trade, and there are scarcely more weavers than weavers' gardens. And yet, let anybody who thinks that there is no greenness in Bethnal go but a stone's throw, and he will see another and a vaster garden than those old refugees dreamed of. Open spaces they had in plenty, for there were Hare-street Fields, where the pond named after Kiddy Harris, a formidable foot-pad and burglar, was long a terror to belated juveniles ; and there were Bonner's Fields, no less terrible for the seven trees, each with a hollow at its foot unfilled and unfillable, marking the spot where, in front of the gloomy mansion, once the abode of the tyrant bishop, seven sisters were burnt at the stake. Beyond that dark house the road lay through country lanes, by roadside inns, by farmlands and pasture, to Hackney Wick and the sedgy banks of the Lea, to Bow Fields and Hackney Lammas Land on either side.

That whole space is the Weavers' Garden to-day, and marks another new era in the history of the old courtly appanage of Bednall ; turned first into a French colony, and then into a grim unblooming wilderness of

streets and alleys, to which no invited courtier comes except to keep royalty in countenance, by attending to open a museum or to initiate a public improvement. It is well perhaps that royalty has given a name to the Weavers' Garden, for the hearts of these people are loyal, and the descendants of the old refugees, such of them as are left, are as faithful to our gentle Queen Victoria as their sires were to William of Orange and the House of Hanover. In fact they have ceased to be French except by heritage of half-blood, and by a certain subtle observant thoughtfulness and keen interest which suits the lines of their faces, where one may still trace the old family likeness. But they retain the old characteristic sense of bright contrasted colour, of rare form and foliage and of artistic design, as you may see when the summer comes again, and the wonderful 'carpet-gardening' of Victoria Park shows grand combinations of hue amidst velvet leaves and petals of satin and shot silk. By the great lakes too, where the burnished feathers of strange wild-fowl flitter, it is pleasant to watch these keen-faced men, delicate-fingered and broad-thumbed, as they point out to wife and children the beauties of the park that is nearly as much their own as Sir W. Rider's garden was his with all its strawberries.

Scarcely less significant of the link which yet binds the Victoria Park of to-day to the Weavers' Garden of the past is the fact that at its main entrance is a hospital where the needs of those who represent the old, as well as the new, industries of Bethnal Green find aid and healing. It is surely a good thing to know that amongst the poor of this still poor district the Hospital for Diseases of the Chest, standing on and beyond

the site of that drear old mansion of the persecuting bishop, is a cherished institution, and that many of the working men subscribe amongst themselves to aid its funds; while it is not uncommon for patients who have received its benefits to come back afterwards with a contribution saved in pence week by week that they may present a free-will offering, in gratitude for kindness which all but themselves have forgotten. Again, going straight through the main artery of the park to South Hackney, another building is to be seen standing in its own grounds, placid as though it were dozing gently, while its deep-hued bricks and high mansard roofs were being mellowed by the sun. It is after the fashion of an old French château, and has a history well befitting its proximity to the Weavers' Garden. A word or two as to its history. The 'Royal Bounty' distributed to the suffering *émigrés* in 1688 still left many aged, many sick, and many infant refugees without resources. In 1708 it was determined by some of the more wealthy of the *émigrés*, and by others of their countrymen who had come to England, to found an asylum to be known afterwards as La Providence. The idea originated with M. de Gastigny, himself a refugee in Holland, and Master of the Hounds to Prince William of Orange. He bequeathed 500*l.* for building, and 500*l.* the interest of which was to be spent on its maintenance. This put some other representatives of the old cause on their mettle, and by the time the thousand pounds had been left to accumulate for eight years a general subscription from Frenchmen and those Englishmen who recognised the benefits conferred on England by the French emigration had amounted to

a sum sufficient to purchase a piece of land called the Golden Acre, a precinct of St. Giles's, Cripple-gate, and close to the present St. Luke's Hospital. Here a building was erected to receive eighty poor persons; and a quaint old building it was, full of dim rooms furnished with wonderful bedsteads, queer spindle-legged tables, distorted chairs, and cupboards that must have afforded rare hunting-ground for generations of mice. In 1736 the building was enlarged, and in 1760 'The Providence' was completed and duly chartered by George I. to his right trusty and right well-beloved cousin, Henry de Massue, Marquis de Ravigny, Earl of Galloway, and other trusty and well-beloved gentlemen of the emigration, who had declined to return to France on any terms, even on the invitation of the King whom they disowned. This was the Hospital for Poor French Protestants and their descendants residing in Great Britain; and from this old building on the Golden Acre arose the new one on the other side of the Weavers' Garden, otherwise Victoria Park, where a company of elderly ladies and gentlemen, the children's children of the old *émigrés*, some of whom came after the Revolution or fled from the conscriptions of Napoleon I., live in peace, the conditions being that

they shall be widowed or unmarried and above the age of sixty years. Here, then, is a fitting memorial of Bednall that shall keep its memory green; and when the governors of the old charity meet at dinner (for which they pay out of their own pockets, by the bye) the international foundation of the charity is recognised by the invariable rule that the repast shall begin with *potage aux choux* and end with plum-pudding, but the regulation toasts are in French.

One word more about the beds and borders, the blooms and shrubs, in the great park. Every year in one of the autumn months a number of 'cuttings' of shrubs and flowers for setting are distributed to the people of the district who may apply for them in proper but simple form. Surely we may call this the Weavers' Garden; but where are the nooks and corners in which the dainty shoots will strike root and grow to make Bednall green once more? Who can say? The weaver and many another craftsman or his wife or some weakly large-eyed child may find a garden in their upper windows now, if only they learn how to tend it. That some of them do so make a band of fresh bright colour in the routine of their working lives is certain.

T. A.

THE SPRING CAPTAIN.

THE London season is ushered in by various outward and visible signs of the crush and gaiety that are about to take place. One by one the squares and crescents and terraces lose their deserted aspect: the old newspapers have been taken off the windows, the sheets and coverings have been removed from the furniture, the painters have departed with their pails and scaffolding, the little plots of grass in front of the houses have been cut and swept, and the walks freshly gravelled; whilst the tradesmen around look up their books and take stock of their goods, for 'the family' have arrived. Now it is that the carriage-builders bring out their newest vehicles and place them in the front of their warehouses, whilst the job-masters walk cheerily round their stables, and think of the prices they can command for the nags they bought for a song during the autumn. Operatic and theatrical managers advertise their companies and quote the opinions of the press upon the new artists who, after having starred in the provinces, are now about to astonish the fastidious metropolitan world. The clubs have taken up their heavy stair-carpet and made their arrangements for additional waiters. Lodging-house keepers are turning into their basement floors in order to have the more space for letting purposes. Pious divines, who pay their way by pew-rents, and who during the past winter have had ample opportunities of living more for the other world than for this, now begin to look up their most

effective sermons, and to study their most imposing attitudes. Cab-owners have brought up extra cabs from country towns to be added to their stock in the London yards. The shops crowd their windows with their most attractive goods, the principal streets have been put in repair, the parks have been trimmed, and the Row done up for the hundreds of horses that are soon to canter up and down it; the offices of the house-agents are filled with country visitors in quest of tenements in a fashionable quarter and at a reasonable price. On all sides there are bustle, activity, and awakened interest, for the season has begun!

From such symptoms the ordinary observer becomes aware that the old state of things has passed away, and that a new *régime* is on the eve of introduction. Yet your true Londoner knows that all this is only the prelude to the play, and that until the appearance of one great actor upon the scene the real drama or comedy of life has not commenced. The streets may be thronged with carriages, the Row may be crowded with equestrians and pedestrians, the columns of the *Post* may be filled with the festivities of the fashionable, the clubs may be so populated that to obtain a seat within their princely walls is almost as difficult as to obtain a seat in Parliament; the uninitiated may look upon the outward world, and greet each other with 'It's going to be a goodish season; town very full!' Still the arrival of one individual is absolutely necessary to consti-

tute the height of the season. As surely as the needle points to the north, or as the barometer prophesies the weather, so surely does the appearance of the Spring Captain on the steps of his club, or taking his walks abroad, calm, important, and resplendent, proclaim to all interested in the matter that the season is at its height.

The 'spring captain' is nothing unless fashionable; he only comes up to town when everybody is there and everything in full swing; and he quits the 'little village,' as he pleasantly terms the capital of his country, a fortnight before Goodwood. Why this distinguished personage should be so careful to identify his arrival and departure with the movements of what is called, down-stairs, 'high life,' is not very easy of comprehension; for the circle of his acquaintances is limited, and he has about as much to do with society as the penny postman has with the Cabinet. He is a man upon town instead of a man about town, and the difference between the two is all that is contained between social exclusion and social admission. In spite of his immense pretensions, candour compels us to state that the spring captain is an 'outsider.'

Yet he is eminently a representative man. Of society's representative men there are various kinds. There is the man who is careless as to his personal appearance—who wears short trousers and dirty white socks, whose hair is unkempt and beard unshorn, and whose large ill-fitting hat is always at the back of his head; who is shortsighted, who is always immersed in diligent perusal, and never met unless with books and pamphlets under his arm; who is given to much lecturing, sporting and amateur writing and reviewing; who adopts no opinions but his own, and silences all opposi-

tion by argument, contention, and incessant contradiction: he is the representative of culture, of progress, and of advanced ideas, which fail, however, to advance him. There is the man who is always starring before the public—who addresses pamphlets to Cabinet Ministers on most of the great public questions, who is incessantly badgering the political committees of clubs for pecuniary aid, who is great at election meetings, who is the ally of Working Men's Associations, and who is frequently to be met with in the lobby of the House of Commons, hanging on to any member who will be content to be bored with his society: he is the representative of political ambition. There is the man, generally in the City, and always in the Volunteers, who is the great critic of strategy and military manoeuvres—who knows the *Army List* as a priest knows his breviary, whose talk is confined entirely to military matters, and who is never so happy as when investigating the military estimates, criticising the working of a new gun, or finding fault with the operations of a campaign: he is the representative of the military spirit of the country. A great warrior this man, and the bloodthirstiest of the bloodthirsty where the honour of his nation is concerned; yet in private life is he mild and exemplary, and is often the most active of churchwardens. The spring captain is, however, none of these things—he does not care for 'culchaw,' he knows nothing of politics, and he 'curses pipeclay': he is the representative of swagger.

Yes, before the shrine of swagger he bows down; in his gait and demeanour he is the fond disciple of swagger; and in all that he does, thinks, and says, swagger in its most exaggerated form has marked him

for its own. As a rule your true man about town is indifferent to dress; he dresses like a gentleman, and it is his object to pass through the world without attracting attention, so far as sartorial art is concerned. Not so the spring captain. His visit to London is not an every-day affair. During the winter and spring he has thought much upon the subject; he has not quitted his dreary provincial quarters for the capital with any intention of hiding his candle under a bushel; nay, he has economised so that the light of his dip during the few weeks he is an external member of the gay world may flare up, and, by the brilliancy of its flame, attract much comment. There are some simple people—generally from the country and the suburbs—who think when once they have donned their finest garments, have walked in the Park without bowing to a soul, have mooned about what they call ‘the West-end,’ and have visited the haunts and show-shops of fashion, that they are really the *habitués* of society, and swells of a most alarming character. To this order belongs the spring captain. He feels that without all the aid of his tailor, hatter, and haberdasher, and without adopting that peculiar dismounted dragoon-like walk, and that remarkable pronunciation of the English language, he would be, what his inner voice plainly tells him he is, a nobody. He is one of those men who think they are bound to bolster up their position by constant swagger and self-assertion; as if a keen inquisitive world did not speedily detect all their little artifices, and place them upon their true level!

The spring captain, like everybody at the present day, of course belongs to a club—not to one of the exclusive clubs, but still a club.

He has a bedroom in one of the back streets near Pall Mall, and his life is not very *orangeuse*. The invitations he receives to dance or dinner are very limited and seldom of a character to advance his progress in society. He, however, cheerfully accepts his position, and is quite content with himself, provided his tradespeople turn him out to advantage. His daily programme may appear to some monotonous, but it is strictly gone through, and seems to give him pleasure. He never, if fine, misses the Park in the morning; and indeed, to me, it would not be the Park without his attractive presence. I like to see him lounge up the Row with his gorgeously-gloved hands behind his back, and dangling his tasselled cane. A fatuous smile overspreads his face, and when he comes upon a crush of people he conceals his shyness by pretending to be anxiously looking for some one in the crowd. Yet, poor man, his fervent prayer is that he may meet no one. What an awful collapse would it be for him, with his glossy hat upon his head, his hair parted behind, his moustaches curled and brilliantined, his dazzling scarf, his neck envired in the highest and starchiest of collars, his exquisite fitting frock-coat, with the expensive little bouquet in the button-hole, his delicate tinted trousers that a fly walking over would soil, his white gaiters and polished pointed boots—I say, what an awful thing it would be for him, with the eyes of the polite world gazing upon him, to meet some of his friends! The acquaintances of the spring captain are always drawn from the eligible set, but his friends do not belong to the same class. It is the one terror of his life that he should come across, when thus attired, like Solomon, in all his

glory, those he knows in the country. Fancy meeting his village apothecary—with whom he plays sixpenny whist during the winter, and whose wife, on Sundays and festal days, is much given to curious bonnets and green-satin dresses of the year one—in the Row during the very height of the season! ‘Ullo! you ‘ere! My, what a swell you are, John! ain’t he, old woman? Well, we are like you. I and the missis have come up to see the sights and gay folk and do the fashionable. You’re alone; come and toddle about with us, and show us who’s who,’ he fancies he hears them say; and he is ready to sink with shame into the boots he owes Thomas three guineas for. He is always alone; it is a characteristic of the spring captain to be solitary; and he knows if he meets any of his provincial friends he will be powerless to avoid them or to shake them off. It is the one bitter drop in the cup of his life, and has more than once marred the pleasure of his visit to London. It does me good to observe him on those trying occasions. I like to see him the perfect tailor’s dummy—haughty, condescending, stolid; and then to see him suddenly greeted in the most affectionate terms by some little cad who in the country may be his bosom friend, and to watch him colour, shift from leg to leg, and whilst in his heart of hearts consigning the intruder to eternal perdition, yet daring not to display his mortification, but pretending to take an interest in the conversation; and then to see him sneak off subdued, crestfallen, and, O, so humble!

Having ‘done’ the Row—that is to say, having walked up and down it a certain number of times without recognising a friend, and having paid his penny for a chair

whilst he smoked his cigar in solemn silence—the spring captain solemnly wends his way along Piccadilly to his club for lunch. Here he is more in his element. Provided he pays for what he orders, he receives the same comfort and attention as the proudest lord. Having economised during the winter for his few weeks of metropolitan splendour, the spring captain does not deny himself a single luxury. At home he may be accustomed to a somewhat frugal board, and his establishment may leave much to be desired; but watch him at the club, and the stranger would take him for the most consummate *gourmet*, and the master of the most princely appointments. With what an air he enters the coffee-room, and gazes at the different dishes on the tables! and how severe he is upon the waiters, if they are in the slightest degree remiss in their duties! At home a maid-of-all-work may dish up his cold mutton, and draw his mug of beer; but at the club he is content with nothing less than the most careful and exacting service. He lunches with his hat on, because he has been given to understand that it is the custom with certain members of Parliament, and with others who imagine themselves to be of high degree. The spring captain is observant, and the most imitative of beings. He watches what the leaders of fashion in his club do, and orders and follows in their footsteps. He drinks nothing but the driest of champagnes and the silkiest of clarets, though as a matter of fact he prefers pale ale or whisky-and-water. Everything that is just in season, and consequently very expensive, he makes a point of ordering. It does not matter whether he likes what he orders, or whether he has ever tasted it before, but, as he says,

it is 'good form.' Who does not remember that immortal spring captain who, having told the waiter to bring him some plover's eggs, took one of them up to eat, and then, in tones of the deepest indignation, bade the servant remove them, as *they were quite cold!* It is the spring captain who is so particular about his lettuce and tomatoes being served up in the French style, though the profusion of oil makes him terribly bilious; who has kidneys stewed in sherry, who sprinkles his ham with champagne, and who carries out to the very letter every gastronomic instruction he has heard of. Yet ask him what he really likes, and he would tell you a steak and a bottle of stout. But your true spring captain is always satisfied so long as he can make a display.

After luncheon comes the important question of how to spend the afternoon. Tobacco and the newspapers carry him on to four o'clock very well; but what is he to do then? He has no calls to make, because he knows no one. For the same reason he never has to put in an appearance at afternoon teas, at homes, or afternoon dances. He does not play whist, and he is dressed too well to soil himself with billiards. What shall he do? Many men under the circumstances might find time hang heavy upon their hands, but not so the spring captain. The public—any public—is his audience, and as long as he can appear before it he is perfectly happy. Solemnly he descends the steps of his club, and begins to take his afternoon's constitutional. He has brushed his hair and spiked its ends after the fashion of spring captains; a new flower blossoms in his button-hole, which he has bought from the hall-porter; not a crease or a bulge is to be ob-

served in his attire; his boots are as bright as polished ebony; and he feels, as he loftily surveys mankind, that he has nothing to fear. He is the most perfect of 'moon-ers.' Without coming across a single acquaintance, without looking into a single shop-window, without observing anything that is going on around him, he is perfectly content to wander up and down the town. His favourite haunts are well known. The Academy, the Burlington Arcade, Regent-street, the lower part of Bond-street, Piccadilly, and the Park constitute his London. Whenever he passes a shop in which there is a mirror, he stops and studies with pride his own reflection. Quite the ladies' man in his own estimation, he puts himself into attitudes whenever he has to pass the gauntlet of the fair occupants in carriages drawn up in front of the establishments of our great mercers and milliners. If a woman makes some audible remark in his favour, or a little boy admiringly exclaims, 'Lawks, what a swell that cove is!' he is made happy for the day. The exercise he takes over the London pavement is a splendid feat of pedestrianism, for he is always walking (except in rainy weather, when he frames himself in the bow-window of his club); and he sits down seldom, because it mars the fit of his frock-coat, and makes his trousers bulge at the knees. And so he passes his day, lounging about the fashionable streets, or uniting himself with the crowd that throngs the Park from Apsley House to Albert Gate, until it is time for him to return to his lodgings and dress for dinner.

Exercise has given him an excellent appetite, and he does not stint himself. A man may say, even in these epicurean days, that he has dined who sits down to

Painter's clear turtle, whitebait, sole *au gratin*, two kromeskys, a dish of cutlets, a spring chicken, a dish of asparagus, ice-pudding, and the whole washed down by a bottle of Perrier Jouet extra dry, and a couple of glasses of old East India sherry. The spring captain always orders the most perfect of little dinners, spends every sou he has upon himself, and reprimands the steward in the haughtiest manner if anything goes wrong with the details of the repast. How often has he told the wine-butler that the vintages were corked when they were not! and when he complains of the smallness and hardness of the asparagus, you would imagine that the kitchen-gardens 'down at his place' were one of the sights of the county, when perhaps he owns a thirty-pound villa and a back-yard.

After dinner of course comes the play. Occasionally the spring captain visits the Opera, and last season he went into ecstasies over Sarah Bernhardt, though his knowledge of French is confined to misspelling the dishes he orders from the club *menu*; but the theatre and the music-hall are his favourite places of recreation. He does not care for severe music and high-class comedy, but he is much given to *opéra-bouffe*, to burlesques, and leg-pieces. Cane in hand and toothpick in mouth, he is one of

the most devoted admirers of the Lotties and Nellies and Claras, whose theatrical photographs are seen in every window. At the music-hall he poses as a patron; he goes behind the scenes, is on familiar terms with the ballet, and stands a bottle of 'fizz' to the great comique; there he is reported to be a lord, and does not contradict the rumour. In his opinion the country is going to the dogs, since the doors of 'the Duke's' have been closed, and Cremorne a thing of the past. 'What is a fella to do with his evenings?' he sighs; and returns to his club, to finish a well-spent day over his cigars and sundry brandies-and-water.

A life of mild imposture is that of the Spring Captain. In the country he may be a worthy and manly creature; but so far as numbering himself amongst the *habitués* of London is concerned, he is the vainest and most empty of snobs. A foolish display in dress when dress is no longer a distinction, petty effeminate airs which only recoil upon himself, a conceit that would be offensive were it not too ridiculous, and an assumed knowledge of the world when he is the most ignorant of its votaries, are his main characteristics. However, he is harmless; he is so completely the fool that it is impossible for him to develop into the knave.

A LITTLE DINNER.

'My dear George,—I should esteem it a favour if you would invite your father's cousin, Alexander McDour, to dinner. He is in London for a few days, at Charing Cross Hotel, and a little attention to him would please me, your affectionate aunt,

'PRISCILLA LOVELL.'

What would I not do to please aunt Prissy! Had she not declared me heir to her thousands? Did she not always tip me handsomely on my birthday and at Christmas? And, present source of gratitude, had she not enclosed me a crisp Bank of England note for ten pounds? *Dear aunt Prissy!*

I sought my particular friend, Joe Grantly, and, having discussed the matter with him, I despatched a note of invitation to Sandy McDour. The messenger brought back an acceptance, and then we talked over all the people we knew from whom we might select a fourth for our little dinner.

'You and I are good company for each other,' observed Joe, thoughtfully watching wreaths of smoke that ascended from his pipe; 'but you ought to get some other old fellow to meet your Scotch friend; they'd understand each other, you see.'

Later in the day chance favoured me. I was walking in Piccadilly, when I came into violent collision with an old gentleman who was bolting out of Bond-street.

'Don't!' I cried, in a vexed tone, as I caught at my new hat.

'I didn't, sir—it was yourself!' ejaculated my adversary; and there

was that true ring of music in the tones of his voice which is only heard north of the Tweed. I looked hastily up, and behold, an old Edinburgh friend stood, first glowering, and then smiling, before me.

'My dear boy! I'm *glad* to meet you, though you've been a trifle rough on me in your greeting!'

'Pray forgive me—inexcusable carelessness,' &c., I murmured; and five minutes later I had mastered the important facts that the friend I had just met knew Sandy McDour well, and would be delighted to meet him at dinner at my rooms next evening at seven o'clock.

Next morning I told my landlord, who was once a butler, that I hoped he'd see to things being all right at dinner. He was clearing my breakfast-table, and replied a little nervously,

'Certainly, sir; but have you seen Mrs. Dick, sir?'

'Not yet,' I said carelessly; 'I'll see her about the dinner presently.'

'Better see her soon, sir,' with an uneasy glance at the door. 'Mrs. Dick is a very amiable woman, sir, but she's *firm*.'

I knew Dick was only Mrs. Dick's husband—not himself—so I pitied him.

'Won't she let you wait, do you mean?' I inquired, filling my pipe.

'I'm not sure as to *that*, sir; but I was thinking more about the dinner—it might be *spoiled*, you see, unless Mrs. Dick was consulted in time, sir.'

'I see. I say, Dick,' I continued, in my bachelor ignorance

(I did not know it was bliss then, and have had the folly to be wise since), 'you should show your wife you are master!'

'O, I do, sir,' cried Dick, with a terrified glance at the open door. 'I'm a firm person myself, sir; but,' hesitatingly, 'I think Mrs. Dick is firmer.'

I thought so too. A few minutes later I had a long and quite pleasant conversation with my landlady, whose ruffled plumes were soothed by a few words of gentle flattery as to her excellent cooking; and she left me with the assurance that everything should be in beautiful order, and that Mr. Dick would be most 'appy' to wait at table.

When the clock on the mantelpiece pointed to five minutes to seven my guests were assembled. Men are, as a rule, punctual as dinner guests. I think they like to enjoy and endeavour to unravel the mixture of delicious odours that pervades a small house just before dinner.

Mrs. Dick outdid herself in the meal she sent up, and Dick's brow was cloudless as he waited. We spoke little, for we were hungry; but when the last relay of plates was removed each man looked at his neighbour with a genial smile, and this showed me the wheels inside the human machine had been sufficiently lubricated, and that mind might now triumph over matter. Finally, Dick removed all but the spirit-case, and with a request that I would ring when I wanted hot water, he withdrew.

We turned our chairs to more easy positions, I stirred the fire to a blaze, and Mr. Craig (the Bond-street hero) addressed Mr. McDour as follows:

'Do ye remember the little discussion we had when I last saw you five years ago, as to the

management of St. Andrews College?'

'I do,' said Sandy; and there was a sideward nod of his head that said, 'And I'm glad to see you do.'

'Well, now,' pursued the other, 'you've altered your opinions since then, surely?'

'Not a bit,' proclaimed Sandy.

'Eh, now! can ye really say that?' incredulously demanded Mr. Craig; and forthwith the battle began.

Did you ever see a Scotchman preparing for argument? Much has been written and said about the war-horse arrayed for battle, the bull entering the arena, and other animals in trying situations; but I repeat again, did you ever see a Scotchman preparing for argument? There is a complacent smile on his lip and a firm gaze in his eye as he faces his adversary that tells of possible conquest and certain pleasure. There is also a little pity in the glance he fixes unflinchingly on the poor fool who dares disagree with him. But here were *two* Scots arrayed, and how deadly the struggle would be I knew not yet, but presently. In even measured tones the two went on, till Joe looked at me and I looked at Joe, and we both looked at the clock. A quarter to ten. I determined in my own mind that old codgers like these went to bed at ten, and, trusting in that delusive hope, I rang for hot water.

'The whisky will soothe them, perhaps,' I mused, as the steaming water, fragrant lemon, and shining lumps of sugar were put temptingly before the combatants.

Soothe them? The smell of the toddy inspired them as a breath from their native hills. The whisky lowered in the bottle and the steam arose from the tum-

blers, and hard at it they still kept.

Once a shout of triumph broke from Craig:

'Then you admit that so much is better than it was?'

'Aha!' explained Sandy, with a sideward jerk of the head and a wink that was deadly in its effect, 'but I *promised* that.'

On again.

I had a piano. Joe was a musician; and a happy thought struck him. He opened the instrument, played a few chords, and commenced singing,

'We are na fou, we're no that fou, [
But just a droppie in our 'ee.'

The struggle waned. Several long sips of toddy were silently swallowed, and then in stento-

rian tones the Scotchmen chimed in,

'For I will taste the barley brea.'

The savage breasts were calmed.

'It is eleven o'clock!' declared the two dissipated old gentlemen, as they put on their coats. They thanked me genially for their pleasant evening, and Dick was sent for a cab.

'For,' said Craig, 'you can drop me at Bond-street on your way, and we'll divide the fare.'

'Ay,' said Sandy. 'Saxpence apiece.'

'And,' I heard Craig say on the steps as they departed, 'we can have a few more words as we drive that I'm thinking will settle our dispute.'

I felt thankful these words would be said in the cab.

M. D.

LOVE AND WAR.*

By R. MOUNTENEY JEPHSON,

AUTHOR OF 'TOM BULLKLEY OF LISSINGTON,' 'A PINK WEDDING,' ETC.

CHAPTER III.

MR. BOLITHO, in his own boundless good-nature, was proof against his old boy-friend's ill-temper; so all he said, when Mr. Buddlecombe plumped himself down into an armchair, and retired with a grunt behind his newspaper, was,

'Ah, Buddle, my boy, you're not yourself to-day.'

'Never mind him, Mr. Bolitho; he's hardly a responsible being this morning,' said Mrs. Buddlecombe. 'Now tell us about the arrival of the regiment; we're longing to hear,' she added, in lower tones.

'Yes, do, Mr. Bolitho. Do you know, I think I must have caught some of your enthusiasm,' whispered Florence archly.

'Well, they'll soon pass,' replied Mr. Bolitho, without the slightest attempt at abating *his* voice. Indeed, of that he was incapable. When Nature had provided him with a *vox humana* she had altogether omitted the *piano* stop. 'I was up at the station and saw the brave fellows arrive; and I've had a delightful morning. I've cheered until I feel as if I had swallowed a nutmeg-grater; and I've shaken their hands until I thought my arm was going to drop out of its socket. Capital fun; first-rate fun!'

'*Sharkung a song goo*,' muttered Mr. Buddlecombe, who was

a dreadful old gourmand, and having very recently imported a long-sighed-after luxury, in the shape of a French cook, now entertained for the beautiful language in which his bills of fare were daily couched a tender passion, which he vented in an occasional French expression.

'I never,' continued Mr. Bolitho, in the same excited strain, 'recognised so fully the fitness of the term "*rank and file*," as when I shook those gallant hands, rough with the grasp of the rifle.'

Mrs. Buddlecombe was quite carried away by the heartiness of this sentiment; and so was Mr. Buddlecombe, but in a different direction.

'I should like to shake hands with the whole regiment; from the Colonel down to the smallest drummer!' she exclaimed.

'Mrs. Buddlecombe,' said old Joe Bolitho, seizing both her hands, while Mr. Buddlecombe's paper rustled ominously, 'my dear Mrs. Buddlecombe, that sentiment does you honour. It is a sentiment which should fill the hearts of all the countrywomen of those men who have braved death by battle and pestilence in a noble and complete vindication of their country's honour. The memory of their deeds should be vividly in our minds this day. How well I remember the graphic descriptions of the glorious fighting which appeared in our papers from time to time, and stirred the heart of old England to its very core!

* The author reserves to himself the right of dramatising this story, or any portion of it.

Something of this sort: "23d Welsh Fusiliers are hotly engaged; the shots fly like hail; the shells scream through the air; the rattle of musketry is incessant; but not a man wavers, except to fall, badly hit." Bravo, 23d! Well done, men of Harlech!"

Here old Joe Bolitho burst forth into a verse of the 'March of the Men of Harlech,' after which he continued, with unabated zest:

"The Rifles on the right are hard pressed; they are in danger of being cut off, and are fighting against fearful odds." Well done, Rifle Brigade!"

And here this distinguished corps, as the previously mentioned one had been, was treated by the enthusiastic old gentleman to musical honours as follows:

"I am ninety-five, I am ninety-five,
But to keep single I'll contrive."

'To keep quiet I wish *you'd* contrive,' muttered Mr. Buddlecombe, in a voice almost choked with emotion.

'That's the quick march of the Rifle Brigade, Mrs. Buddlecombe; to which, as the old 95th, they marched so often in the Peninsula to death or glory,' said Mr. Bolitho, who then resumed, with increased fire, "Bring up the guns! Up they come; splendidly led!" Ah, as the song says:

"They're the boys as minds no noise,
Is the Royal Artilleree."

'Don't mind a noise, eh?' said Mr. Buddlecombe, with forced calmness. 'Bolitho should join that corps. He'd be the right man in the right place then.'

"The guns are in danger!" roared old Bolitho, quite unconscious in his excitement of Mr. Buddlecombe's running commentary. "Highlanders, to the rescue! The wild pibroch rises above the din of battle, and down come the Forty-twas to the charge."

Hoop-là! Bother it; I mean Hoot, mon! "A cheer rings along the line; and on comes the splendid regiment to the soul-stirring sound of their bagpipes." Highland Laddie.'

And here old Bolitho actually burst forth into an imitation of the bagpipes. The effect on Mr. Buddlecombe was fearful. He sprang to his feet, dashed his newspaper down for the third time, strode up to Bolitho, planted himself in front of that worthy, and poured forth the following with a terrific volubility, which went like the rush of a torrent:

'Bolitho! Bo-litho! we were boys together; we knuckled down tight together; we flew the garter together; we fought together; we have grown up together; we have grown gray together. Consequently you are on those terms of intimacy with me which permit you to do pretty nearly what you like in my house. But I must draw the line somewhere. And I draw it at imitations of the national music of Scotland. *That's* a thing which *no* one could stand who hadn't been weaned on Glenlivet whisky; and I happen to have subsisted for the first few months of my existence on a somewhat milder beverage.'

'Ha, ha, ha!' laughed Mr. Bolitho. 'Brought up by hand, I should think, on a nice little mixture of cayenne-pepper, petroleum, and gun-cotton.'

'What are you to do with such a rhinoceros-hided old buffoon?' said Mr. Buddlecombe, turning on his heel with an air of the deepest disgust.

'Well, well, we sha'n't quarrel about it, Buddle, my boy,' said Mr. Bolitho soothingly, 'you say we fought together as young boys. Well, we won't as old ones. But for the life of me, I can't recollect that particular fight.'

'O, yes, we had, though, Bolitho,' said Mr. Buddlecombe, as if he had not the slightest intention of allowing his laurels to be snatched from him. 'O, yes, we had, and I whopped you. That was the term we used in those days,—*whopped*. I mayn't go strutting about blowing trumpets, and beating drums, and waving flags as *your* heroes do; but nevertheless I whopped you, Bolitho, and, what's more, you admitted yourself vanquished.'

'Very well, so be it,' said old Bolitho, laughing. 'History repeats itself, and I give in again. It always pleases him,' added the hearty old fellow aside; 'I think he must have dreamed it.'

'Hush! listen,' said Florence softly, as Mr. Buddlecombe bustled off on a fourth attempt to read his newspaper. 'I think I hear the band.'

'I don't hear anything,' said Mrs. Buddlecombe.

'Neither do I,' said old Bolitho.

'Yes; I *do* hear it,' said Florence, getting as pale as a lily and holding up a finger.

Then Mrs. Buddlecombe and Mr. Bolitho each held up a finger and stood intently listening, while Mr. Buddlecombe, who had now once more intrenched himself behind his *Times*, glared over the top of his paper parapet at them with savage contempt.

Florence was right. Love may be blind, but it can hear uncommonly well. Faintly, but unmistakably, the strains of a military band playing a quick march, mingled with the hoarse sound of distant cheering, fell on their listening ears.

'Yes, there they are, just leaving the station!' said old Bolitho excitedly. 'We shall only just have time to get down to the lodge and settle ourselves comfortably before they pass. Come along,

Mrs. Buddlecombe. Come along, Florry.'

And before Florry had time to answer, her eccentric old godfather snatched up the huge bouquet, seized her round the waist, and ran her through the French window.

For the fourth time was the newspaper dashed to the floor, and Mr. Buddlecombe rushed to the window.

'Florence! Come back, miss!' he shouted. 'If you so much as dare even to look—O, she's gone! She's clean off with that detonating old dotard!'

And here Mr. Buddlecombe reëntered the room in a towering passion, and confronted his wife on her way to the open window.

'Joshua,' said Mrs. Buddlecombe, arresting her footsteps, and speaking in calm, collected, and forcible tones, 'you betray a deplorable want of tact and knowledge of human nature. If you are anxious to predispose your daughter favourably towards these young officers; if, in plain language, you want her to fall over head and ears in love with the first one she sees, you are, by abusing them, going exactly the right way to work. I speak from experience. I'm sure I never felt so much inclined to fall in love with you as when my sainted and prophetic mother, — *prophetic*, Joshua, I use the term advisedly — as when my *prophetic* mother said she was quite convinced you would turn out a perfect brute.'

Having poured this raking broadside into her consort, Mrs. Buddlecombe swept majestically from the room, and as she stepped out on to the verandah, looked over her shoulder with a beaming smile, and sweetly warbled,

"O, isn't he a darling,
The brave soldier-boy!"

For several moments the wor-

shipful mayor of Puddleton stood in the centre of the room completely dumbfounded.

'There,' he at last exclaimed to an attentive congregation of furniture, 'there's the effect of the military! For nearly a quarter of a century have Georgina and I hit it off with tolerable tranquillity. We have certainly had a protracted struggle for supremacy of many years' duration, but we have not, as a rule, if ever, descended to personal abuse. On the bare approach of the military, however, she becomes rampagious, calls me a brute, and sings an improper song. "O, isn't he a darling," indeed! I am not certain that after that revolting expression of Georgina's sentiments I should not be justified in suing for a divorce *a mensâ et toro*. Is not even the home of a mayor safe from the baneful influence of a licentious soldiery? There they go, the noisome noisy brood, turning this once pure and peaceful Puddleton into a pandemonium!'

This last alliterative sentence referred to the strains of the band, which during the above had been getting louder and louder, until now in a rich wave of sound they broke upon Mr. Buddlecombe's ears. Mingling with the music were the cheers of the crowd and the peals of joy-bells from many a church-steeple.

'O, isn't that enough to drive any one in his senses out of them!' ejaculated Mr. Buddlecombe. 'Are these legalised and caressed assassins and cutthroats to be allowed thus to turn the beautiful harmony of Puddleton's existence into this abominable discord? Not if I can help it. No military man shall ever darken my door with his presence, or may I be—'

Here most opportunely a sud-

den apparition at the open window diverted Mr. Buddlecombe's thoughts. It was that of a man, all in white from head to foot, enthusiastically waving a ladle over his head.

'*Vive la gloire!*' shouted the man in white, with his eyes almost starting out of his head. '*Vive ze allies of la France! Vive Napoléon! En avant!*'

And with one final and frantic wave of his ladle, he dashed on to join the throng of spectators.

'Dear me! that's my new French cook,' said Mr. Buddlecombe, quite taken aback for a few moments. 'Hi!' he shouted, as he recovered himself and rushed to the window; 'hi! I say! *C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas what you're paid your salary for, mong garsong!*'

It is hardly necessary to add that this had not the slightest effect; and Mr. Buddlecombe was returning once more to his chair, with a superhuman effort at resignation, when a housemaid ran past the window, brandishing a dustpan and shrilly shouting,

'Three cheers for the soldiers!'

'One month's warning from this day, you shrieking Jezebel!' shouted Mr. Buddlecombe from the window.

Then a footman ran past cheering, and at him the worshipful gentleman hurled an *ormolu* ornament; then a scullerymaid, waving a duster, and shouting,

'Down with the perlice! The milingitary for ever!'

'O, do you know, if this sort of thing goes on,' said Mr. Buddlecombe, in tones of blank despair, 'the whole house will be converted into a lunatic asylum, and I shall enjoy the luxury of a strait-waistcoat and a padded cell all to myself. I—I—I feel at this moment that if it wasn't for my naturally phlegmatic and calm

disposition I should break down under the mental strain.'

So saying, Mr. Buddlecombe was just about to take a seat, when an obsequious individual of between fifty and sixty years of age, in a swallow-tailed coat and pepper-and-salt trousers, entered the room with a deference that was almost abject. This was Mr. Spigot, the butler.

'Why don't *you* go and cheer, Spigot?' said Mr. Buddlecombe, with grim irony.

'No, your worship,' replied Spigot, who was quite aware of his master's antipathy to the army. 'I have taken the liberty of coming to convince your worship by my presence that I wouldn't demean myself by doing so. I don't approve of the military, your worship. Far from it. The only good I know of soldiers is, that they're a bit of a hantidote to the police. When a young girl forms a hopeless attachment for a policeman, she cures herself by falling in love with a soldier. That's the only good I know of soldiers, and that, your worship, is a virtue I don't think worth going and hollering myself hoarse over.'

'Spigot,' said Mr. Buddlecombe warmly, 'you have proved yourself worthy of the position of trust which you hold. This is the first bright spot in the opaque darkness of a transaction pregnant with disgrace to Puddleton.'

'Certainly, your worship,' said the obsequious Spigot; and with a low bow he withdrew.

'I wonder what abominable folly my wife and daughter, under the leadership of that elderly buffoon Bolitho, are up to,' thought Mr. Buddlecombe, as he went to the window, and looked out. 'Hullo! what do I see?' he exclaimed, starting with indignation. 'Georgina, in the character of Beauty, is about to "crown Va-

lour," and is preparing to throw the bouquet at the Colonel with all that elaboration of gesture peculiar to the feminine method of taking a shot! Georgina, you're disgracing—'

What had happened? The band stopped playing in evident confusion—the first instrument to give in being the big drum and the last the piccolo, which on such occasions always will have the last squeak; while Mr. Buddlecombe's demeanour underwent a startling change. In the midst of a most scathing denunciation of his wife's conduct, his contracted brow relaxed, and he burst into a loud laugh. He held his sides; he smote first one leg and then the other; he rocked himself backwards and forwards, and he laughed until the tears ran down his cheeks. The shortest way to enlighten the reader, who is no doubt eager to trace this extraordinary effect to its cause, is to give the spasmodic utterances which escaped the worshipful gentleman himself in a series of gasps and wheezes and chuckles.

'O dear, she's crowned Valour with a vengeance! She's hit the Colonel's charger over the head with her bouquet, and he's reared up, and then put his near off-leg, or whatever they call it, through the big drum. And the whole procession is thrown into confusion. And old Joe Bolitho, who has rushed through the lodge-gates to apologise, is falling a victim to popular indignation, and is being freely bonneted by the mob. O, delicious! Yes, I'll cheer; I'll cheer *now*!'

And standing on tip-toes at the window, Mr. Buddlecombe put his hand to the side of his mouth, and gave vent to his feelings.

'Hooray! hooray! Go it! Give it to old Bolitho! Welt him!

He's always at his practical jokes ! He did it on purpose ! Duck him in the horse-pond, and I'll pay for any damage he does to the bottom ! Hooray !

These ebullitions speedily brought Mr. Spigot on the scene again, aghast and alarmed.

'Why, he's gone off his worshipful chump !' gasped the faithful old retainer, after standing for several moments in speechless astonishment.

'Come and cheer, Spigot,' exclaimed Mr. Buddlecome, suddenly catching sight of him. 'Come and cheer.'

'Certainly, your worship.'

And Spigot, joining his master at the window, gave vent to a laboured 'Hooray !'

'Throw a little more derision into your cheers, Spigot,' said Mr. Buddlecombe sharply. 'You must remember they're *derisive* cheers.'

'Certainly, your worship. Hoo—'

'O, get away !' snapped Mr. Buddlecombe, relapsing into his former mood as suddenly as he had emerged from it. 'Be off with you !'

'Certainly, your worship,' said Spigot, adding, as he hurriedly sidled out of the room, 'He turns sour as suddenly as a barrel of beer in a thunderstorm.'

What was the matter *now* with Mr. Buddlecombe ? Jealousy was the matter. The green-eyed monster had seized him in the midst of his banter.

'This sight maddens me !' he exclaimed, as with clenched fists and scowling brow he stood glaring on the enemy at his gates. 'Georgina waves her handkerchief to the Colonel, and the Colonel kisses the tips of his white gloves to Georgina. Chartered libertine, beware ! She's mine. I'll call him out. I don't know,

though. He rather looks as if he'd come. No, I won't call him out. I'll call Georgina in. She rather looks as if she wouldn't. However, I'll try. Georgina, Georgina !'

Just at this moment, however, the band struck up again ; and Mr. Buddlecombe, after uplifting his voice in vain for several moments, retired into the room, and walked up and down it with an agitated demeanour.

'Ridiculous nonsense all this drumming and trumpeting ; only fit to impose upon a few nursery-maids and weak-minded youths,' he contemptuously ejaculated as he paced the room.

Nevertheless, he had not taken many turns when he became slightly influenced by the martial strains, and after a little he gradually and unconsciously assumed quite a military strut.

'Martial enthusiasm, indeed ?' he continued. 'All stuff and nonsense. How ridiculous I should look pointing my toes and holding my head up in the air !'

With this last remark of his he became a striking instance of the difficulty we all experience in seeing ourselves as others see us, for holding up his head and pointing his toes was just the very thing he was doing as hard as he could.

'What senile folly, old soldiers fighting their battles over again ! How can they be such old fools ! I fought old Bolitho, though, when we were boys together. O yes, I did. And I licked him too ! O yes, one doesn't go bragging about fighting, but still we're all there when we're put to it. Rather ! How well I recollect it all ! But *he* doesn't. With a view to mitigating the horrors of war as much as possible, I stipulated, previous to the combat, that hitting in the face wasn't to be fair. At the

second round Bolitho hit me what we called then a one-er—a *fearful* one-er on the nose. I didn't wait for a two-er; but, with the wonderful promptitude which has characterised all my actions in life, I sank to the ground and claimed the victory. O yes! I mayn't go bragging about like Bolitho and these puppies in red coats, but I've got a spice of the fighting devil about me when my blood's up.'

A roar of laughter, which did not require old Bolitho's jolly countenance at the window to tell whom it came from, here rang through the apartment, and Mr. Buddlecombe subsided with a sheepish air.

CHAPTER IV.

THE Queen's Own Fusiliers speedily shook down in their new quarters; and officers, non-commissioned officers, and men, with a lively sense of the hearty welcome they had received from Puddle-ton, devoted themselves, in their several spheres, to the cultivation of that friendly intercourse with their civilian neighbours, which a very high authority on military matters has laid down as a duty of the highest importance, incumbent on all ranks of the army during the piping times of peace.

Of course after returning from active service leave was granted to as many as could possibly be spared, and the regiment was consequently reduced to a skeleton; but what was left of it fully upheld the regimental reputation for sociability and hospitality. Of all the guests bidden to the officers' mess old Joe Bolitho was the most honoured. There was a genuine heartiness about the old

fellow that at once took them all by storm. He was not only hearty in manner, but also hearty in deed; and for the first few days after the arrival of the regiment, until the officers' mess was open, his comfortable bachelor quarters were open morning, noon, and night for such of the officers as chose to breakfast, lunch, dine, or sleep under his hospitable roof.

One evening, within a week of the eventful morning so fully described in the preceding chapters, Mr. Bolitho sat in the ante-room at the barracks in the midst of a sociable little circle of Fusiliers. There had been other civilian guests at dinner; but all had departed except Mr. Bolitho, and his broad-backed old-fashioned swallow-tail was the only black coat in the room.

'Well,' said Major Burstrap, a fine fat old veteran, who commanded the regiment in the absence of the Colonel on leave, 'your townsmen, Mr. Bolitho, are wonderfully civil and attentive, with the exception, I must add, of your worshipful mayor.'

'Ha, ha, ha!' laughed old Bolitho. 'I'm afraid none of your cloth will get much civility and attention from my cantankerous old friend, Joshua Buddlecombe.'

'No, we don't expect it,' said an officer. 'We heard, directly we came here, that he was rabid against soldiers.'

'Rabid! I should think he was,' said Bolitho. 'Why, he called me a deadly upas-tree, blighting the innocence of his daughter, a few days ago, merely because I happened to mention something about the regiment in her presence. Ha, ha, ha! But, bless you, I don't mind what names he calls me, for we were boys together.'

'By Jove! what an awfully

pretty girl the daughter is!' said Lieutenant Spoonbill.

'Why, where on earth did you see her?' asked Mr. Bolitho, in considerable astonishment; 'for, to my certain knowledge, she has not been allowed outside the grounds ever since you marched in, and a pretty good piece of my mind have I given old Buddlecombe on the subject.'

'O, we saw her yesterday,' replied Spoonbill, 'from the top of the regimental drag over the high garden-wall, as we drove past. She was walking along reading a letter, and when she looked up she did more execution in our ranks, by Jove, than the Russians ever did. The only one who didn't seem hit was Warriner, who was sitting next to me.'

'Ah, Warriner, my boy,' said old Bolitho, with a kind and admiring glance at a handsome young fellow with his right arm in a sling, 'Cupid, after all, is more discriminating and generous than I gave the young rogue credit for. He remembers you have been badly hit already in the service of his father, Mars, and he aims his shafts elsewhere.'

'Yes, I suppose that's it,' said young Warriner carelessly, 'and I'm sure I'm much obliged to his impship for his forbearance.'

'Or is it the memory of another's charms, my dear boy, that renders you invulnerable?' said old Bolitho. '"So faithful in love and so dauntless in war," eh? Is that your case, Warriner?'

There was a kindness in the old man's *badinage*, which, together with the difference in the ages of himself and Warriner, cleansed it of all offensiveness, and the young man, who most assuredly would have resented such a liberty from any other stranger, allowed the old fellow's remark to pass with a

shrug of the shoulders and a good-natured smile.

'I am told,' said old Major Burstrap, who, having arrived at that age when the seat of the affections seems to take a downward direction, was anxious to change the conversation into a channel more congenial to himself, 'I am told that the Mayor has a first-rate French cook.'

Old Bolitho turned his eyes up, heaved a deep sigh, and stroked his waistcoat. The eloquence of this beautiful pantomime was not lost upon Major Burstrap.

'And I am told, too, the best port in the county; is that the case?' he continued, with visible emotion.

Old Bolitho again sighed and murmured, 'Wonderful, wonderful!'

'Really it is a thousand pities,' said Major Burstrap, in a beautiful spirit of Christian meekness, 'that this unfortunate antipathy to us should be allowed to exist a day longer. It makes one feel positively uncomfortable to know that we are objects of such undying rancour. One so seldom comes, nowadays, across really good port that— Dear me, I mean it is our duty as Christian gentlemen to do everything in our power to remove this impression. That was what I was going to say, when you so unceremoniously interrupted me, Smithers.'

'I didn't say anything, Major,' replied little Ensign Smithers very meekly.

'No, but you *looked* as if you were going to, and that is quite as disconcerting—more so, in fact. Don't do it again, my dear fellow.'

'Very well, sir.'

'That's right,' said the fat old Major, with touching forgiveness. 'Now, Mr. Bolitho, don't you think you could act as peace-

maker between your worthy Mayor and ourselves?

'When oil and vinegar amalgamate, but not until then, I fear,' replied old Bolitho. 'Nothing short of a miracle will ever alter his opinion of you. I know him well, for we were boys together. He would as soon think of asking a rattlesnake to his table as one of your distinguished profession.'

'One wouldn't care a rap, you know, if it wasn't that he had such a pretty daughter,' said Lieutenant Spoonbill.

'And such a beautiful cook,' added Major Burstrap. 'Dear me, there you are again, Smithers, throwing me completely off what I intended to say.'

'I really did not even *look* as if I was going to speak this time, Major,' expostulated the meek little Smithers.

'No, I know you didn't; but that's just where it is. I felt you were belying your looks. Now do exercise a little more self-control, my dear fellow.'

'Very well, sir.'

'That's right. Now, Mr. Bolitho, can nothing be done to convince your worthy Mayor that we are respectable members of society?

'Nothing, Major. He's a confirmed lunatic on that point.'

It being now very late, old Bolitho tore himself away from the pleasant company with considerable difficulty. As he walked home he thus soliloquised:

'I tell you what, it's just as well my little god-daughter Florry won't have a chance of seeing that young fellow Algernon Warriner. My heart warms to the good-looking plucky youngster. What an old ass Josh Buddle is!'

CHAPTER V.

EVER since the introduction of the French cook, it was Mr. Buddlecombe's custom, when not dining from home, to repair in the evening about half an hour before the dinner-time to his snug library, opposite the dining-room, there to con over the *menu* with the assistance of Florence, who knew a little more French than he did. 'For,' said Mr. Buddlecombe, 'I always like to look before I leap.'

In conformity with this rule, Florence was at her post one evening about three weeks after the Queen's Own Fusiliers took Puddleton by storm.

'Dear me,' she exclaimed as she entered the room, charmingly dressed for dinner, and glanced at the clock over the mantelpiece; 'how early I am! Papa won't be here for a little yet. I shall have time for just another read.'

Taking from the bosom of her dress a letter which she kissed rapturously, Florence broke into a dreamy monologue:

'O, if papa only knew that ever since the regiment arrived here I have been in regular communication with Algy through the postal medium of a crack in the garden-wall! and that we have spoken lots of times! If papa only knew it, I wonder what he'd do! Astomamma, she thinks Algernon perfection; but she says she would never run counter to papa's wishes, and he is, if possible, more rabid than ever against the army and every one connected with it. Mamma has certainly made a concession. "Florry," she said, "when I see Mr. Warriner a guest at your father's table by your father's own invitation, I promise you faithfully I shall throw all my weight"—and that's saying a great deal in mamma's case—"into your cause."

But I'm afraid mamma only said that because she knew the conditions were utterly impossible. Though if we could only get her on our side success would be merely a question of time, I believe; for with all papa's bluster he generally gives in to mamma in the long-run. I'm afraid this would be a very long run, though. In fact, not a run at all—more of a crawl. I told all this to Algy, and his letter to me to-day nearly takes my breath away. O, what mad folly is he contemplating! I'll just have one more read:

"Darling Florry,—I have been thinking over what your mother has said about never countenancing our engagement until I am a bidden guest at your father's table. Now, my precious little Florry, where there's a will there's a way, and I mean to dine with you and your esteemed parent, the worshipful mayor of Puddleton, this very evening. That capital old fellow, Mr. Bolitho, tells me he dines with you to-night, so we shall be quite a pleasant little party. You say you are quite sure your mother will keep her promise; and with her on our side we shall be over the stiffest fence with nothing before us but comparatively plain-going.—Your devoted and loving

"ALGERNON."

'Mean to dine with us to-night!
O, what mad impracticable scheme

can Algy be contemplating? I'm afraid his heart has quite run away with his head. How I wish I could communicate with him, and implore him to give up this insane project! But, of course, our *poste restante*, the crack in the garden-wall, won't be called at. What *can* he mean? He surely can't intend to obtrude himself by force. O no! In the first place, Algernon is too much of a gentleman for that; and in the second, it would not be fulfilling the conditions, for that would not be by papa's invitation. O, I know; he's going to dress up as a woman. No; that can't be it. He would look such a monster in petticoats that he couldn't escape detection. And then he couldn't, O, he couldn't have the heart to shave off that lovely moustache! O Algy, Algy, what an agonising state of perplexity you have thrown your loving Florry into! And to think, too, I shall have to meet papa in a few moments with a smiling countenance and a composed manner to read over that abominable *menu* to him! What sacrilege, reading a bill of fare after Algy's letter! I shall just have time for *one* more read of the precious note:

"Darling Florry—"

'O no, I sha'n't. Good gracious, here's papa coming down the stairs!'

(To be continued.)

• OUR LONDON NOTE-BOOK.

I THINK it was Brunel, the famous engineer, who, whenever he woke in the morning and found London enveloped in fog, used to exclaim fervently, 'Here's another fog; now I shall be happy and well.' His theory was that fog is really the healthiest of climatic conditions, and I know that some eminent physicians are of the same opinion. Had Brunel been living, London would have been a very Elysium to him for the last month or so; for 'town' has been wrapt in a blanket of fog for a most unconscionable time. It can hardly, however, have been such horrible and depressing specimens of the genus fog as we have lately been favoured with that the engineer and the physicians I have referred to consider beneficial to health. As a safeguard against many possible evils, the *Lancet* tells us we must do our best not to become depressed. The advice is wise, but difficult to follow. Nevertheless, there is much about a London fog which is interesting—its humours are well worth studying. Mark first how eccentric and erratic is a London fog. It shows a singular partiality for certain districts at certain hours of the day—a feature which I am at a loss to account for, unless I am to suppose that this atmospheric phenomenon is under the control of the Metropolitan Police or the Board of Works, both of which institutions are peculiarly qualified to understand the natural history of 'fogs.' Be this as it may, I have witnessed often the curious

phenomenon of one half of Piccadilly lit up with brilliant sunshine, whilst the other half was shrouded in densest fog.

But there are other aspects of the London fog, which are even more interesting to the social philosopher. Who that has experienced the delicious sensation of being hopelessly lost in a fog at midnight in a lampless hansom, and having consequently to crawl along by the kerb at the rate of a mile an hour for two or three mortal hours, trusting to Providence that he might be going in the right direction, will ever forget it, or will ever cease to be thankful for this Heaven-sent and supreme test of temper and patience? Terrible stories, too, have reached me of belated pater-familias wandering helplessly at night round squares (thus circling the square, if not squaring the circle), seeking in vain for an outlet, until some friendly policeman came to the rescue with his bull's-eye, and guided the wanderer home. I need hardly say that the fog is a perfect godsend to many Benedicts as an excuse for irregular hours. For who but the most stony-hearted wife could reproach her spouse with being late under such circumstances? Surely to receive him back at all safe and sound is too pleasant and joyful a surprise to allow of any other feelings. I am told, too, that the effects of the London fog upon some persons thus delayed by it in their return home is occasionally such as to suggest

that as an excuse it may rank with 'the pickled salmon' which Mr. Pickwick found so exhilarating on a memorable occasion. As for the railway companies, they of course hail King Fog with hearty delight, for under the ægis of his protection they may indulge in late trains and accidents without fear of public opinion. Enough, however, to show that a London fog has aspects of interest worth studying by the social philosopher.

Mr. Henry Vizetelly, in his *Berlin under the New Empire*, has done for the German capital what Mr. Sala, in his *Paris Herself Again*, has just done for the French capital: he has given us a graphic, racy, and faithful picture of Berlin under its altered conditions. The English reader who has never visited Berlin will gain from Mr. Vizetelly's entertaining volumes a vivid idea of the humours of the Berliners in every phase of their social life; and the reader who has visited Berlin will recognise the fidelity of the sketches, and enjoy heartily the humorous and satirical touches which make the pictures the more effective.

It is not, however, a very pleasing impression of Berlin and the Berliners that is left upon us by a perusal of Mr. Vizetelly's amusing pages. The city itself, with its horrid smells and exasperating sand-storms, with its execrably paved streets and its abominable footways, offers but slight inducements to a foreigner to visit it; whilst of the inhabitants Mr. Vizetelly says, 'The Berliners are neither remarkable for the amiability of their demeanour nor the sociability of their disposition.' The inhospitality of the Berliners is supplemented by their prover-

bial ill-breeding. Mr. Vizetelly absolutely sets one's teeth on edge by his frightful description of the awful and reckless manner in which 'the ladies and gentlemen' of Berlin use their knife-blades at meals; as though they had each and all been taught from infancy to regard sword-swallowing as one of the accomplishments of polite society; whilst the want of common gallantry and politeness to women shown by the men is enough to make one blush for one's sex. 'No man,' said a lady to Mr. Vizetelly, 'rises to open the door for you when you leave the room. If cups of tea or coffee have to be handed about, it is the lady of the house that will carry them round; she will be rewarded with a *Tausend Dank, meine Gnädigste*, but the "most gracious" will be allowed to trot about all the same. You may search an hour for your *sortie de bal* in a cloak-room before one of that group of glittering beings assembled round the door will put out a helping hand.'

Of the Berliners women Mr. Vizetelly says: 'They may be safely summed up as being less handsome than the English, less graceful than the French, and less clever than the Americans. You might promenade the Prussian capital for weeks without meeting a really beautiful woman.... The worst feature of a Berlin belle is her nose. The outline of this organ, instead of being straight or delicately curved, is frequently broken by an exceedingly prominent bridge; while the end as often develops into a ball, imparting an unpleasant and vulgar expression to what might otherwise have been a handsome set of features. The face is usually fat and pasty-looking, presenting large dreamy eyes, and not unfrequently an ex-

quisitely moulded mouth, with full ruby lips, which, unfortunately, have lost their charm from the fact of the front teeth commencing to decay at an early age. The figure is generally good, though often diminutive.'

In Berlin, and, indeed, throughout Germany generally, the men take the lead in social as well as public life, whilst their wives drudge away their existence in sordid details. 'Woman in the Prussian capital,' says Mr. Vizetelly, 'has none of that politico-social influence exercised in London and Paris by the queens of the *salon*. . . . Her sole duty in life, after the nuptial knot has been tied, is to be domesticated, to wait hand and foot upon the nobler being who has condescended to unite his lot to hers, to concentrate her whole attention upon household affairs.' A terribly prosaic lot is that of the German wife. 'The German marriage,' as Mr. Vizetelly reminds us Heinrich Heine has observed, 'is not a real marriage. The husband has not a wife but a servant, and continues in imagination, even in the midst of his family, his bachelor life.' Englishwomen—and we have, perhaps, cause to be thankful for it—possess, for the most part, too much spirit to endure such slavery in wedlock.

The 'Hatch, Match, and Despatch' column of the Berlin newspapers affords much more entertaining reading than that of our English dailies. For the Berliners are not content with the mere bald announcement of a birth, a marriage, or a death. Mr. Vizetelly gives many amusing instances, from which I shall select two :

'With God's gracious help, my tenderly loved wife Sophie was safely delivered this morning, at

4.30, of a strong boy. Hallelujah! —H. KLEINWACHTER, *Pastor*.'

In the following the bereaved husband announces his future intentions with even more complacency than the young King of Spain did on his betrothal to the lady who is his present queen :

'I here give notice to my friends and acquaintances that I have just lost my well-beloved spouse at the moment she was giving birth to a son, for whom I am looking out for a wet-nurse, until I meet with a second wife willing to assist me in my grocery business.—Signed, —.'

I could go on quoting amusing and interesting bits from Mr. Vizetelly's volumes without end, but the exigencies of space forbid me. I can only recommend those who have not yet seen *Berlin under the New Empire* to read it; and I am sure they will thank me for introducing them to a very pleasant and readable book. I must not forget to add, by the way, that the work is enlivened by four hundred illustrations, most of them humorous, which form an admirable supplement to the letter-press.

I suppose there is not at the present moment a more popular preacher in London than Canon Farrar, and his literary reputation has undoubtedly been immensely heightened by his recent works. It is hard to imagine that the author of the *Life of Christ* and the *Life of St. Paul* is identical with the writer of *Eric* and *Lyrics of Love*. But perhaps Canon Farrar's greatest literary failure was his attempt to portray Cambridge life in *Julian Home*. The learned and eloquent Canon will, I am sure, not be grateful to a certain foolish young Cantab who has revived the memory of that

failure by publishing a volume, entitled *Sketches of Cambridge in Verse*, under the *nom de plume* of 'Julian Home.' At first, I am ashamed to say, I believed the author to be Canon Farrar himself under an *alias*; but that belief was only momentary. I am not an admirer of the Canon's verse, but the author of *Lyrics of Love* could never have perpetrated anything quite so bad as this:

'Ah, the towers are still looming,
And the wild bees still abooming,
And the deep graves still entombing
Granta's cultured ones.'

Surely this eccentric young gentleman cannot have been expecting a premature resurrection of 'Granta's cultured ones' in response to the blast of his penny trumpet!

It is pleasing, however, to find that the Muses have not yet forsaken 'Granta's stream,' and that the *Alma Mater* which nurtured Tennyson and Praed and Hankinson can still inspire her sons with the sacred fire of song. The following stanza is exquisitely touching; the poet is describing an innocent and thoughtless child playing (a sight, by the way, I do not remember ever to have seen in my time) in the quads of St. John. This child, he tells us:

'Plucking posies, little knows
That he steps above the stones
Of departed ones,
Who, in youthful revelry,
Moved in pleasure's galaxy
In the courts of John's.'

From the fact that the writer makes 'ones' rhyme with 'John's,' I judge that he must be an Irishman, and I appreciate the cleverness with which the Hibernian pronunciation of 'ones' is introduced. If this be a specimen of the poesy of Young Cambridge, Oxford must decidedly look to her laurels!

Talking of Cambridge—and as the two universities will, by the time these lines meet the reader's eye, be prominent topics of conversation in 'town,' it is permissible to introduce Cambridge into a 'London Note-Book'—there has for some time past been a curious correspondence in *Notes and Queries* on the question, 'When were trousers first worn in England?' In the course of this correspondence I have lighted upon the following curious piece of information: 'In October 1812, orders were made by Trinity and St. John's Colleges that students appearing in hall or chapel in *pantaloons* or *trousers* should be considered as absent.' What, then, were they to appear in? Not, surely, in *puris naturalibus*? nor, whatever Scotchmen may think, in kilts! No; *breeches* is (or should I say *are*?) the solution of the problem. The Dons, you know, are, and always have been, intensely conservative in their notions; and, at the beginning of the century, they looked with horror upon the 'indecent innovation' (!) of trousers. I should like to have seen the face of old Dr. Whewell if he had met any undergraduate proceeding to chapel or hall in *breeches*! Such are the changes of fashion, and so 'the whirligig of Time brings about his revenges.'

There is an old proverb—a most impolite and ungallant old proverb—which relates to the wearing of these aforesaid masculine garments by women; and the association of the two reminds me of the fact that there was a time when the Dons had as great a horror of women as of trousers. Not more rigid precautions were taken to keep Satan out of Paradise than were adopted to keep women, especially young women,

out of the quiet retreats consecrated to celibacy and study. One of the earliest and drollest of these precautionary measures is to be found among the old statutes of St. Peter's College, Cambridge, and the ideas which it suggests are so humorous that I shall make no apology for quoting it at length. It runs thus:

'We enact, by way of prohibition, that no washerwomen, more especially young ones—if men can be found *expert in the washing of heads*—shall enter the chambers of the scholars, either openly or secretly, under any pretext or colour whatever; but that if any female of their relations, or any other honest females, should desire to hold counsel, conversation, or discourse with them for any honourable and lawful reasons, the interview shall take place in the Hall, or in some other respectable place, in the presence of some other scholar, or at least some honest servant of the house, if any one can be easily obtained, *the conversation being carried on in this manner discreetly*, which matter we lay upon their own consciences. And we further enact that the scholars' vestments to be cleansed by means of laundresses shall be carried to them to be cleansed by one of the sworn attendants of the said college, whenever it may be necessary, and afterwards be brought back again, when cleansed, by him or some other, unless perchance they may have a male washer. But if the scholars *stand in need of having their heads washed or their beards shaved*, that the master shall provide a person for that purpose—the porter if possible, or some other servant of the college—who may be both able and willing to perform both offices. *It is better, certainly, that all these matters be performed by males, than that, by*

the coming in of women, anything should by any means happen to the scandal of the whole college.'

One would scarcely have cared to converse with a 'female relation' or to 'hold counsel, conversation, or discourse' with 'any other honest female' even for 'honourable and lawful reasons,' with the college-porter standing by as the representative of decorum. What would those old Dons have thought of the May Term of these days, with its flower-shows, its garden-parties, and its delightful flirtations among the shady 'Backs'? As for the head-washing and shaving by women, however, I think they were wise to put their veto upon that. Even now the 'barber's bill' is an item in university expenditure which sorely puzzles paterfamilias, who cannot understand how his hopeful son contrives to spend 7*l.*, 10*l.*, and 15*l.* in a barber's shop during a term of eight weeks! Had the university authorities sanctioned the presence of young and pretty women as professional exponents of the arts of shaving and shampooing, the 'barber's bills' of susceptible and gallant young undergraduates would assume perfectly appalling proportions.

There is a certain kind of curiosity which is usually dubbed 'vulgar,' but it could not, of course, have been this kind of curiosity which attracted a fashionable crowd to the sale of Monsignor Capel's 'effects' at Cedar Lodge. Yet that they came purely out of curiosity of some kind was obvious, for they made no pretence of buying, and the various articles of what Mrs. Malaprop would have called 'bigotry and virtue' went for absurdly small prices. Fancy a Vandyck fetching only ten

guineas! But perhaps these fashionable visitors were all staunch Protestants, and feared to purchase anything which had the taint of 'Papisty' about it. In any case, I question the good taste of such curiosity.

I will bring my notes to a conclusion with two cruel *mots* which have come to my knowledge, both very recently perpetrated; the one in London, the other in Paris, society. There is a lady well known in London society for her intellectual attainments, whose physique is slight and fragile to an extreme degree, though as a traveller she has shown herself capable of great exertion and endurance. At an evening party not long since, an eminent literary man was discoursing enthusiastically to one of the reigning belles on the splendid mental gifts of the aforesaid lady. 'She is wonderfully clever,' he went on to say, 'and her calmness of manner and presence of mind are wonderful.' The reigning beauty, who is of the Dudu type, and of what Sir Walter Scott calls 'generous proportions,' smiled sarcastically, and said: 'Yes, Mr. Blank, I grant you her presence of mind; but is it not a pity there should be such an absence of body?'

The other *mot* is as follows: At a party in Paris recently there was amongst the guests a well-known financier of fabulous wealth, who is consequently held in the highest respect. Strange to say, although at the very lowest computation he cannot be less than sixty-five, his luxuriant hair and whiskers retain the hues of early manhood. They are, in fact, as black as the proverbial raven's wing. On the strength of this

hirsute juvenility, he still affects to be—and indeed believes himself to be—a deadly lady-killer. The ladies of Paris, out of respect for his money-bags, humour this fancy of his, and pretend to take his gallantries *au grand sérieux*. On the evening to which I allude, this glossy-haired Adonis of three-score and ten was as usual the centre of a circle of pretty women, upon whom he was lavishing his gallant compliments with his wonted freedom. Presently, however, he rose, and made his way to a lady who sat alone upon a sofa. 'O monsieur,' exclaimed this solitary beauty, with a well-affected air of prudery, 'I beg of you not to approach me; it is really too compromising to be seen conversing with you alone.' 'I, madame—to be seen conversing with me! Nay, madame,' said the old buck, in high delight; 'you must be mistaken.' 'Ah, no, monsieur! Your adventures are the talk of Paris.' Then, with an exquisitely coquettish shake of her fan, 'Fie, monsieur! you are dangerous. I beg of you to quit me.' 'O madame,' said our septuagenarian Lothario, gently playing with his beautiful black whiskers, and passing his hand gracefully through his thick raven curls, 'O, madame, I thought you at least were more generous and less censorious. You remember that even his Satanic Majesty himself is not so black as he is painted, and you shouldn't therefore paint me more black than I really am.' 'O, really, monsieur,' said the lady, with a wicked smile, 'that I assure you would be impossible.' And a certain unmistakable titter from the circle he had just left apprised monsieur that the sarcasm had reached further than he could have wished. JUNIUS JUNIOR.

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'She remained resolutely silent.'

See 'The Mystery in Palace Gardens,' p. 204.

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THE MYSTERY IN PALACE GARDENS.

BY MRS. J. H. RIDDELL.

CHAPTER X.

IN THE FOREST.

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pleasure, or wounds him sitting in his pew at church with some arrow shot at a venture by the preacher. There can be no question Conscience knows now and

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you stand,' she said, in those pitiless, uncompromising, matter-of-fact tones which she uses when she wakes a fellow up in the middle of the night, or runs straight at him while he is immersed in business or steeped in

was the reason of the contest that had been raging within his breast: he loved her. He had felt pity for the man; but for the woman, love. There was no wrong in his pity; but there was sin in his love. Loyalty and disloyalty,



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CHAPTER X.

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WHEN a man falls into arrears with his conscience it is for much the same reason as that which gets him into trouble with his creditors. In both cases he fails to look affairs in the face: in the one, he declines to ask himself where he is going; in the other, how he stands.

Drifting is as common in morals as in trade; and in morals, as in trade, the practice generally ends in bankruptcy.

Mr. Hay had got a good deal behind with his conscience; and now, when suddenly the book lay open before him, and he was forced to glance at his position, to cast his eyes upon the meagre credits and the large debits that appeared upon the face of the account, he felt appalled.

For a time Conscience had it all her own way. 'That is how you stand,' she said, in those pitiless, uncompromising, matter-of-fact tones which she uses when she wakes a fellow up in the middle of the night, or runs straight at him while he is immersed in business or steeped in

pleasure, or wounds him sitting in his pew at church with some arrow shot at a venture by the preacher. There can be no question Conscience knows now and then how to deal a blow; that there are times when she catches a man under the fifth rib, and stabs him to the heart.

Here was a victim to her liking; unarmed and defenceless. He wore no mail-shirt of self-love, or proof-armour of righteousness. He was no hardened sinner, no unprincipled deceiver. His soul was tender, and his mind pure; and it is not too much to say he recoiled with horror from the knowledge so suddenly revealed to him.

Yes, he loved the woman; from that time forth there could be no deception about the matter. This was the key-note of the music which had, from the first, penetrated his innermost feelings with melancholy delight; here was the reason of the contest that had been raging within his breast: he loved her. He had felt pity for the man; but for the woman, love. There was no wrong in his pity; but there was sin in his love. Loyalty and disloyalty,

friendship and treachery, the hand of a benefactor, the heart of a robber ! How should a man who, in his own person, combined all these contradictory attributes, and harboured such conflicting sentiments, rest in peace ? How ? He knew now he had not so rested ; that life of late had been uneasy and unsatisfactory ; that the dual existence he had been leading was a source of perpetual strife and self-deception ; and that if he was to do any good for the future, to bring a disengaged mind to his business, and feel any pleasure in his leisure hours, he must turn his back on the East of London, and cast behind him the temptation that dwelt there.

It was not too late. Thankfully he repeated that sentence over and over again ; he had dallied with nothing save his own sense of right, striven to deceive nothing except his own conscience. It was not too late !

Swish, over the dead leaves and the rotten twigs and the withered ferns that lay thick on the ground, came a flying footfall. Under the arching trees, along one of the long aisles in that green cathedral, he strode on, head drooping, heart sad, thoughts busy ; but fast though he walked, the rapid footsteps followed faster. Swiftly if he likes, a man may stride through life ; but he never can escape the consequences of his own acts once they begin to hurry after him. Shod with seven-league boots they rush along, and though he may seem to have left all chance of such pursuit behind, they are following, and will come up with him some day.

Someday ! For this man, fleeing already in imagination from the evil he could not endure to contemplate, that day had already dawned.

Ah, what a dreary waste of

hours and minutes and seconds it proved ! It lengthened into years, during the course of which he walked over arid plains, and trod scorching ploughshares ; he drank the waters of affliction, and he ate his bread with tears.

His life ! He had meant to live it honestly, soberly, religiously ; he had so lived it through many an uneventful year ; and now he was at war with himself, at issue with all the instincts, prejudices, and habits of his education, because he had met in the morning twilight a woman exceeding beautiful, a woman most passing fair.

She was close upon him ; and yet still unwittingly he walked forward, busy with accusing thought. Lightly adown the grassy glades she sped on ; the branches of the trees met overhead, and interlaced themselves into arches open to the sky. Through the tracery of that marvellous roof the young moon shone fitfully ; now clear and cold, anon drifting behind some passing cloud.

‘ How fast you walk ! ’ said Mrs. Palthorpe, panting a little as she came up with him.

He did not hear her ; absorbed in his own reflections, he did not know she was behind ; at that hour and in that part of the Forest he thought, if he thought at all, he must be quite alone.

She ran a few steps further, and laid her hand on his arm.

He turned and looked at her ; drew back with a gesture almost of dread ; uttered her name with a moaning cry, that he was unconscious of uttering, and reeled to the nearest tree, against which he leaned white and trembling, as though he had seen a ghost. Perhaps he had ; who can tell ? The events of the future may have cast an awful shadowy horror

before them, a terrible something, unseen by other eyes, unimagined by other hearts.

Mrs. Palthorpe looked at him in surprise.

'I have frightened you. I am so sorry. I did call to you; but I could not make you hear,' she said more eagerly, and with greater interest than she had ever evinced before.

Ere she finished her broken sentences he was himself again.

'You did startle me for a moment,' he answered. 'I never thought of meeting any one here.'

'I saw you turning into the Forest as I crossed over from the common,' she explained, 'and I followed, as I wanted to speak to you.'

'I regret you should have had so much trouble,' he said. 'If I had known—'

'Yes; but you see you could not know,' she interrupted hastily. 'I had not made up my own mind until I was coming home from Leytonstone, and then seeing you in the distance quite decided me.'

He scarcely knew what to answer.

'You should not have hurried so much; you are quite out of breath,' he remarked, taking refuge in an obvious platitude.

'I was afraid of not overtaking you,' she returned, 'and I wanted to say something to you particularly.'

'What is it?' he asked, and his voice sounded stern, by reason of the very repression he was putting upon it.

She stood silent for a moment; silent and still in the twilight of that winter evening.

Everything around was quiet as death. At that moment they might have been hundreds, thousands of miles distant from London. Even the hum of the great

city could not penetrate those bosky glades; not an echo of the million voices so close to them came floating through the long aisles, carpeted with green, roofed with boughs.

The moon looked down upon them: upon the man leaning half in shadow against a tree; upon the woman standing a few paces distant, with the light shining full across her face, giving to it an unearthly beauty, touching it with a pale ethereal loveliness.

He shivered, and drew closer still to the trunk of the tree. She hesitated; she had never been easy and ready in her speech towards any one. Words did not glide off her tongue nimbly, as is the case with most women. Though not in the least degree shy, she had the manner of one reserved, from whom expression only proceeded with a certain difficulty. A person speaking a foreign language imperfectly would have seemed to labour under the same sort of difficulty she experienced.

It all had its charm. When wedded to such beauty it was only another lever, not the less dangerous because it was one she herself felt as a defect.

Was it the place or the circumstances which also suddenly abashed her?—the cold dreamy questioning of the curious prying moon, the total loneliness, or an unaccustomed stiffness in Mr. Hay's bearing that caused her first to cast her eyes on the ground, and then to look timidly askance into the darker portions of the Forest, as she began,

'You will think me too bold, I am afraid; but I wanted to say I know now who sent that money.'

'Indeed?'

'Yes,' she went on hurriedly: 'I know you did. You, and none

other. I always thought it strange he had a friend. Poor people know no friends. Why you have been so good I cannot understand.'

He could. An hour ago the fact might have puzzled him; but it did not baffle him now.

'What makes you think I sent it?' he asked evasively.

'I do not think—I know,' she answered. 'If thinking could have told me whom it came from, I should have guessed long ago; but nobody ever finds out anything by thinking. I do not, at least. It all came to me in a minute this afternoon, just in a flash. "He sent it!" like that.'

In her eagerness and excitement she drew a step nearer to him; but he never moved. He only looked at her moonlit face, his own almost in shadow, feeling it could not be real; that it was not he, but some quite different person who stood within a magic circle in the depth of the wood, gazing upon this woman who had gained such possession of him!

'You will keep my secret?' he said at last hoarsely, his very voice sounding strange and unfamiliar in his ear.

'Trust me,' she answered, with that something in her tone and words and manner which jarred upon his finer susceptibilities. 'If he knew or suspected, he would never rest, or give anybody else rest. He could not bear to lie under the weight of such a burden. I do not mean it would be either worse or better coming from you than from anybody else. If I told him, he would fret till he was ill again. It is just because he cannot imagine where the money came from and who sent it, he says he is grateful. He would think he had accepted charity, if he fancied you gave it.'

'But he said distinctly this

afternoon he felt differently about such matters now,' urged Mr. Hay, dimly conscious it would have been kinder to give the injured man a letter to the hospital than in his weakness and extremity fetter him with such help as this.

'He said!' she repeated scornfully. 'O yes, I have heard all that, and understand how long it would last. You may think this a fine summer's evening if you like, Mr. Hay; but you cannot make me think it one. I know better. I know my husband, and you do not.'

He could not have told what he knew or what he did not. He was dazed and bewildered and wretched. The old strong feeling of sympathy with the man now seemed to have no separate existence apart from his love for the woman. He could not sever them; he could not tell how much he had done for the first, or whether every kindly thought and generous act had been prompted by the second. He had but one desire left—to get away, to flee for his life, and escape while there was yet time. And she stood there, perfectly unconscious of his struggle, with the moonlight flickering through the branches, and shedding a weird glamour over the beautiful face that had bewitched and was enticing him to destruction.

'He is as proud as—' Mrs. Palthorpe did not finish her simile, but hurried on, feeling, apparently, she had narrowly escaped a stumble. 'They were all the same. It was only pride made the old gentleman cut him out of the property; only pride made Tom come up to London when he might have had a comfortable home at my grandfather's. People don't change in a minute; and you couldn't, as my aunt says, take the pride out of a Pal-

thorpe any more than you could thorns off a rose-tree. It is in the stock. They were proud at the beginning, and they'll be proud to the end.'

Yes, and it was this pride he had taken the surest subtlest means to wound. Better have left him alone—helped him instead to the hospital or the work-house, for that matter!

'I ventured to tell you this,' said Mrs. Palthorpe, 'and to ask you to be careful. The doctor cautioned me yesterday that any excitement might cause a relapse, and I am sure I don't know what would become of us if he got thrown back again. As it is, the doctor says it will be long before he is fit for desk-work.'

'I am afraid it will,' agreed Mr. Hay gravely.

'I wish I could get something to do,' she said eagerly. 'I would rather be out than sitting idle at home all day. Aunt said I never should be of much use; but I think if some milliner would try me I could earn a little money. I have always trimmed my own bonnets.'

He moved hurriedly out of the shadow.

'You must not think of such a thing, Mrs. Palthorpe!' he exclaimed. 'And I cannot allow you to remain standing here any longer. I will walk back with you to the main road: it is getting too late and too cold for you to remain on this damp grass.'

Like an intermittent fever, another stage of his disease was on him now. Husband and wife were so helpless he could not cast them off. Evidently there existed no danger so far as she was concerned. No one but a coward would turn away from people in such extremity. He would clothe himself in triple armour, and instead of fleeing temptation, resist it. A

milliner's assistant! His whole nature arose in revolt, a spasm of jealousy shook his soul, as he thought of simpering exquisites and battered *roués* making pretexts to see the lovely shopwoman. He must contrive some means of support for them, something which, while considering the husband's spirit of independence, should deliver the wife from sordid cares and preserve her from degradation.

He was a clever man of business; but he did not know much about women. He had still to learn how difficult it is to degrade some of the sex or to preserve others.

'You need not turn back on my account,' she said. 'I shall get home quite safe, thank you,' and she was genuine in this remark. She wanted his help, but she did not in the slightest degree desire his society. Not that she objected to it; she was simply indifferent. He could not help knowing that; he could not avoid seeing he had never caused a thought or awakened a feeling that might not have been published to the world. She did not long for his company, but he would not suffer her to go alone.

'She is perfectly guileless,' he considered; 'as fearless and as innocent as a child. I must help them, get them out of their present difficulties, and then—Good heavens! you are not hurt, I hope?' for suddenly she tripped over the root of one of the trees, and in a moment he had saved her from falling, and was supporting her as she cried aloud with pain.

'You *are* hurt; you have sprained your ankle; lean on me,' he entreated; and any bystanders must have heard how full of tenderness and anguish was his tone.

'It is nothing,' she answered; 'nothing indeed; only I knocked

my foot; and I never could bear pain—never;’ and as she lifted her eyes for a moment he saw they were swimming with tears.

He was terribly concerned.

‘Do not attempt to move at present,’ he exclaimed. ‘You are sure you have not sprained your ankle? Can you stand?’

She laughed outright, laughed and sobbed at the same moment, as she said,

‘I am not used to have such a fuss made about me. If I had broken a bone you could not look more frightened.’

‘I am thankful you have not,’ he answered. ‘I was frightened for the moment. Are you better now? Should you not like to stand here a little longer? No? Are you quite sure? Then take my arm;’ and so, slowly and almost in silence, they paced the Forest glades, he every now and then looking anxiously in her face; she smiling back her assurances that the pain was almost all gone, that she was certain she had not hurt herself seriously.

They left the wood and proceeded along the high-road till they reached the lane which led down to Roding Farm. Here she withdrew her hand, and said,

‘I am quite right now, thank you. Please not to come any further. He would want to know why you returned, and might be frightened.’

‘Are you quite certain you can manage by yourself?’ he asked anxiously, holding the hand that had just before been laid on his arm. ‘I do not like letting you go alone.’

She laughed a little once again.

‘As I have told you,’ she said, ‘I am not used to being so much thought of;’ and she was going, when he stopped her.

‘One moment, Mrs. Palthorpe. Do not, pray do not think of trying

what you spoke of a little while since. Leave all to me. I shall be sure to hear of something that may enable your husband to earn an income. I feel so sorry for him—and—you. It seems terrible for young people to have met with such misfortunes. You will trust me, won’t you?’

She looked at him, astonished both by his words and his earnestness.

‘Of course I will,’ she answered, seeing he was waiting for her reply. ‘I have no one else. I don’t know any one besides yourself who could help us—or who would,’ she added *sotto voce*.

‘Then that is settled,’ he said; and he stood and watched her till she was far down the lane, after which time he followed at a distance till he saw her turn into the trim garden in front of Roding Farm.

He did not leave the spot for some minutes after he heard the door shut behind her; and when at length he turned on his way to Leytonstone, he did not retrace the Forest glades, but, rigidly keeping to high-roads and made footpaths, he strode past great houses and pretty villas, and reached the station, that lies almost under the shadow of a church-tower, just as a train from Loughton slackened speed and ran slowly along the metals, stopping with much noise of brakes and a pleasing deliberateness of movement.

Half an hour later he was in the Sunday stillness of Fenchurch-street, wending his way westward, and feeling like a man who, having essayed to fight an unequal battle, creeps worsted off the field.

CHAPTER XI.

MRS. PALTHORPE'S DECISION.

THE world seems full of empty niches, but whenever one wants to put self or friend into even the humblest of them, that moment, as if by magic, each place is claimed as bespoken.

We all in a small way find this the case. No matter how humble our aspirations, no matter how small the post be we wish to secure for clerk or servant, for man or maid, so certainly we find all the avenues leading to fame or competence full of seething struggling humanity.

To look at the advertisements in the newspapers one might imagine no man need stand idle a day; to try for a situation of any kind is to find talent, energy, honesty, youth, experience, at a discount. Buying, we are told, is one thing, and selling quite another, and practically each day proves the truth of this; for if we want a butler or a manager, a groom or a secretary, how difficult it is to suit ourselves, to discover the precious article of which we are in search! But if we desire to sell, we find the labour-market literally overflowing with human goods of precisely the same description as we are bringing into it, that the qualities we offer have lost all value, that they are considered so much inferior raw material which cannot be worked up into any useful or profitable purpose.

This was what Mr. Hay found, at all events. Standing under the moonlight, away from the noise and turmoil of London, it had seemed to him that it would be quite easy to fit Mr. Palthorpe into some desirable post—a secretaryship, for instance, where he need do little or nothing save talk pleasantly and read the newspaper; but if he had wanted the manager-

ship of the Bank of England or some post in the Royal Household, either might apparently have been more easily compassed.

Each man he spoke to had his own especial *protégé* to provide for, or else the question of health came on the *tapis*. If neither of these causes indicated failure, then there came the 'hope deferred' business; a 'good' thing would be open shortly, a new company was to be launched in January, and if Mr. Hay chose to interest himself in that, why, doubtless some berth could be found for his friend; an opportunity might offer shortly in connection with the Midlandshire Mining Company, and so on, till Mr. Hay decided it was of no use trying to obtain any appointment through his friends. 'I must buy him something,' he considered ruefully enough, for by this time he had begun to count the money that walk in the morning twilight, that bunch of grapes, was likely to amount to; and then the question came, what should he buy? what useful toy was it most likely the sick man could be induced to accept and turn to advantage?

Here, by the way, two great mistakes may be pointed out, and the attention of those who believe they are honestly willing to give is especially invited to it.

Supposing that a man wants help who can help himself, and who is more than anxious to help himself, rich folks are too apt to say, 'O, he will do better without us; he is quite able to breast the hill,' and so leave the person who only requires a touch of the hand, a very trifling assistance up the hill, to strain and strive and well-nigh kill himself in the struggle to mount it. On the other part, take the man who is absolutely helpless, who requires money and strength and friendship to mount

the steep, how do we find wealthy friends treat him? As a rule, just thus: they give him a lift, say, for a hundred yards or so, buoy up his expectations, raise his hopes, and then remarking, 'It is of no use trying to achieve impossibilities,' leave him stranded by the roadside in somewhat worse plight than the good nineteenth-century Samaritans found him.

But this was not Mr. Hay's way, and hence his perplexity. He had taken up the matter, and he meant to carry it through. Only he did not know how, which involved a trouble certainly. He would have set him up in a shop, or started him in business, or helped him to the good-will of a lodging-house, or got him some desirable agency. The trouble was, he did not know the precise line in which Mr. Palthorpe's genius lay. He could not in the slightest degree guess either his weak or his strong points; and he did not desire to so far increase their acquaintance with each other as to be able from actual knowledge to say, 'This will suit him,' 'That will not.'

At last suddenly the thought occurred to him, 'He might like a farm;' and satisfied that such an arrangement would in all probability best solve the difficulty, he started off one morning just before Christmas to sound Mr. Palthorpe on the subject. Since the Sunday when he and Mrs. Palthorpe walked through Epping he had never visited Wanstead. On that Sunday night he came to a resolution, and he meant to stick to it. He would not run his head into the lion's mouth of temptation and ruin. A wild beast's den, he felt, might sometimes be a safer abode for a man than the companionship of a fair woman, let his training have been what it would, and let her have been born as much below

him as she might. He was not a boy, he was not an imbecile, and he knew now what it all meant; for alas, he found he was human, and he could never forget she was fair.

Nevertheless, he had not given up Mr. Palthorpe, and he did not mean to do so till that gentleman was in a state of body and position of mind to climb the world's steep hill alone. Here lay the trouble. If the man had been purely selfish he might have fled and found safety; but he was drawn back again into the meshes of temptation, not merely by his weakness and worst impulses, but also by the best attributes of his nature.

To define such a struggle as went on within him is difficult; to sketch-in the details, to show all the lights and shades, the sunny bits in the mental landscape, the gloom of the deeper shadows, well-nigh impossible.

In a warfare of this sort a man is never thoroughly conscious of all he has passed through himself. Such battles cannot even in imagination be fought twice. It is like mortal illness: when a patient recovers he rarely remembers the details of his physical trial. The days and the nights have come and gone, filled with such alternations of pain and weakness as have dulled the sense of time. That is all he can tell of the progress of a malady, the effects of which, perhaps, abide with him to the end; and it was thus with the man whose moral struggle I have so feebly and faintly described. He did not know, he never knew, how often he had wrestled with his foe, how he had thrust temptation behind him, how he had struggled against his inclinations, and resolved—vainly—nothing should lead him into sin.

On that point, at least, he felt perfectly satisfied. He meant no

wrong, he would do no wrong. He intended no disloyalty to Mr. Palthorpe; all he wanted, now he understood the workings of his own heart, was to benefit the husband and the wife, place them in a position where they would have a chance of escaping from the thralldom of poverty, and never see either of them again.

Quite honestly he made this resolve; but it would have required a stronger nature than his to keep to it in the face of the circumstances that ensued.

As he went along Fenchurch-street he was stopped by Doctor Dilton.

'I am so glad to meet you,' said the doctor. 'I have been wishing to see you for some time.'

'Is it—about—Mr. Palthorpe?' asked Mr. Hay, startled and surprised; for in his preoccupation he had passed the doctor unnoticed, and the suddenness of the address alarmed him.

'Yes; about Mr. Palthorpe.'

'He is—not—dead—is he?' asked the other.

'No, he is not; he is improving; he is a great deal better, indeed; but still I wanted to speak to you about him.'

As they stood, several people nodded to Mr. Hay or said 'good-day,' or made some other slight remark in passing, many of them addressing him by what the doctor supposed to be his Christian name.

Under these amenities Mr. Hay waxed impatient.

'Let us get out of this row,' he suggested; and the doctor having no objection, they turned down Rood-lane and crossed Great Tower-street, and so came out into a quiet corner near St. Dunstan's-in-the-East.

'I have not been able properly to attend to a word of what you have been saying,' Mr. Hay began, looking up at the spire of the

'lantern' church, as though he were addressing it instead of his companion. 'You were telling me something about your patient.'

'I was asking if you had influence with any house likely to give him a berth in the Colonies.'

'In the Colonies!' repeated Mr. Hay; 'does he want to leave England?' O, if he did, if he only did, what a relief, what a blessing, what a comfort it would be! For a moment Mr. Hay's heart swelled with thankfulness; then it seemed to sink, depressed by an overwhelming despair.

'I do not know,' answered the doctor; 'I have said nothing to him yet, because I hoped to see you, and ascertain whether you considered my idea at all capable of being carried out.'

'But why do you wish him to go?' inquired the other.

'Because he will never get thoroughly well here. He won't keep quiet. If his body is still, his mind is at work. It would not be natural for a man of his age to endure idleness. He wants to get out and begin to earn money. He is grateful for the gifts which have been sent him, and yet he chafes at taking them. I can see all that plainly. Her—Mrs. Palthorpe's—grandfather has offered them a temporary asylum there; but though he makes no objection, I am sure the very idea is gall and wormwood to him. Now I like my patient, and I am proud of the cure I have effected so far; and for these reasons I do not wish him to become an invalid for life.'

'I hope there is no likelihood of that.'

'There is every likelihood of it,' answered the doctor, 'if he attempts to exert himself too soon or too much. He will never again be fit to undertake the duties of an ordinary clerk. Constant desk-

work would kill him. My notion was that if you knew any one having a house abroad where a reliable man was wanted, or where room could be made for a reliable man, you would be doing a kind and Christian action in mentioning the circumstances of this case. A long sea-voyage would be the making of him—a voyage with a certainty of work at the end of it.'

'I think I understand,' said Mr. Hay as the doctor paused.

'You see, on board ship he must keep quiet. He would have the best of air, food, and some companionship; and—and—altogether, it would be the making of him,' repeated the doctor. 'Do you think you could give a helping hand to what we want?'

'I think I could. I will try, at any rate,' was the answer.

'Thank you greatly. May I ask you one thing more—don't think me troublesome—when could you begin to try?'

'To-day, this hour,' was the eager answer. 'I will set about the matter at once.'

He stretched out his hand and would have hurried away immediately; but the doctor detained him.

'I am afraid you are not quite well, Mr. Hay; you are looking much thinner than when I saw you first.'

'A mind ill at ease,' thought Mr. Hay; but he only answered, that he had nothing the matter with him, felt as well as he ever did in the whole course of his life.

'Were I you, I should take a little rest or change, or both,' persisted the doctor. 'You seem somewhat nervous.'

'Wear and tear of business,' explained the other. 'I have a good deal on my shoulders.'

'Making haste to be rich,' said Doctor Dilton. 'Well, each man

to his taste. I could not endure the turmoil you City men live in; but then I am quite a country bird. By the bye, we shall be leaving Stratford in the spring.'

'Indeed! Where are you going?'

'To the borders of Wales. I have heard of a quiet little practice there that will suit me, I think, and the children will grow up stronger and better in the country; besides, Mrs. Dilton does not like London.'

'I hope you will be very happy in your new home,' said Mr. Hay civilly.

'I fancy we shall; we have been very happy hitherto. Now,' he added, 'be warned, and don't go on taking so much out of yourself. What use is all the money in the world without health?'

'It is so much better, at any rate, than poverty without health, as light is better than darkness,' laughed Mr. Hay.

'Well, perhaps you have the best of it,' answered the doctor; and then they finally separated, the doctor to make his way along Great Tower-street and Eastcheap into the heart of the City; and Mr. Hay to dive into Lower Thames-street, for he had quite given up all idea of going to Wanstead that day.

At length it seemed as though he was in a fair way of getting Mr. Palthorpe such a berth as Doctor Dilton recommended. About that time clerks of every kind were at a premium in Australia. Every one was off to the diggings. The gold mania pervaded all ranks and all classes; sailors left their ships, shepherds their flocks, servants their situations, husbands their wives. The finest lottery ever imagined was opened in Australia, and tickets in it were to be obtained by any one willing to work. Ledgers remained shut, day-journals were

not written up, return crews were hard to obtain, and an *employé* certain to remain at his post was worth his weight in gold.

Under these circumstances it was not long ere Mr. Hay heard of a house who professed their willingness to open negotiations with Mr. Palthorpe. They wrote to him, and he answered; they applied to his references, and found everything he had stated literally correct; they made him an offer which sounded munificent; he jumped at it. He hoped he should get perfectly strong on the voyage, he said, and they would not find him ungrateful for all their kindness.

Doctor Dillon had an interview with the firm, and satisfied the partners that his patient would be fit for work many a day before he reached Australia.

'Could he sail in February, do you think?' asked the head of the house.

The doctor felt certain he could. The sooner he left England, the sooner he would begin really to improve.

'All he wants now,' added that worthy gentleman, 'is rest of body and ease of mind, and he will have both in your good vessel,' he added; and so the matter once mooted was quickly decided.

At the farm all was bustle and confusion; a pleasant excitement succeeded to the former dead level of monotonous days and anxious nights; letters arrived and letters were written; the outfit had to be provided and trunks procured. His new employers acted with great liberality towards him, and Mr. Palthorpe was not permitted to lack any necessary for want of funds.

'I rub my eyes and wonder if it is all real,' he said joyously to Mr. Hay. 'I think crossing the ocean will make a new man of me;

indeed, already I feel a different person.'

Mr. Hay went backwards and forwards to the farm a good deal in those last days. Of course he was quite safe now. There could not be the slightest danger to him; there had never been to her. Thousands of miles would soon stretch between him and this fairest of women, and then he—Ah, he would not think of that; would push the idea of the time when it could be no longer optional with him whether or not he went to see her far behind.

Sufficient for the day! Well, the days went by all too swiftly, and it was the last before the Palthorpes were to leave London. They meant to go on board at Plymouth, stopping a night at Mr. Aggles' house on their way down.

Everything was settled; the heavy luggage was in the vessel, the lighter packed, corded, addressed. Down in Hampshire the old grandfather and the stern middle-aged aunt were talking about their expected guests. At Roding Farm every one felt glad Mrs. Palthorpe would so soon be gone, and sorry at the thought of parting with her husband. Doctor Dillon had paid his last visit, and cordially wished his patient 'God-speed.'

'You will write to me, won't you?' he said; and gave the intending emigrant that new address on the borders of Wales to which he had referred in his conversation with Mr. Hay.

'I will be sure to write, and I will never, never forget your kindness, doctor.'

'Kindness? pooh!' answered Doctor Dillon. 'It was my business to get you well, and I have done it.'

Then he spoke a few kindly and hopeful words to Mrs. Palthorpe, but she replied to them with short curt sentences and averted eyes.

She was in one of her worst moods. She bade Doctor Dilton good-bye with the scantiest civility, and when he said he trusted she would like Australia, answered, with a scoffing laugh that had no merriment in it, she had no doubt she should when she got there.

After his departure she left the room, and, putting on her bonnet and shawl, was in the act of crossing the hall, when her husband met her.

'Going out, Mira?' he said, and his face flushed a little and his voice trembled.

'Yes, I am tired of being indoors. That doctor too has given me a headache; I thought he never would take his departure.'

'It is the last day,' he suggested pleadingly.

With a founce and impatient exclamation she turned her back upon his entreating gaze.

'I thought we had done with all that,' she said, and went out of the front door, banging it after her.

Mr. Palthorpe took down his hat, and for a moment stood irresolute; then sighing wearily he hung his hat up again, and, walking into the sitting-room where he had spent so many weary, weary hours, stood for a long time looking out of the window over the fields and the trees and the pleasant homely surroundings that were soon to become a mere memory of the past.

'Is it my fault?' he thought. 'I know I must have been a heavy burden, but yet—'

She went down into the Forest; she sought one of the grassy glades along which she had once followed Mr. Hay. She was not thinking of him, or of any one save herself, as she paced restlessly up and down on her solitary path. It had been a mild winter, damp and warm, and already there were

primroses in the sheltered nooks, and everywhere the cushions of moss looked green and beautiful.

The afternoon had come, but the air did not strike cold, though the sun had gone for the day, and Mrs. Palthorpe, walking up and down, had a lovely colour in her cheeks, and looked more beautiful in her anger than most women do in their smiles.

She wore a becoming though somewhat shabby bonnet and a bright shawl, and altogether made a pretty bit of colour in the landscape as she moved to and fro amongst the trees; now choosing one glade, again deserting it for another; sometimes pausing, as though debating some question with herself at leisure; and then hurrying on, as though a restless demon were urging her forward.

She might have spent about an hour in this fashion, in a solitude only broken by the incursions of a few schoolchildren, or a herd looking after stray cattle, when, entering one of the long avenues, she beheld a figure she recognised.

'It is Mr. Hay,' she said, pausing; then hurried swiftly forward. 'Who would have thought of meeting you here!' she exclaimed, still with the vivid pink in her cheeks and mellow light in her eyes.

'I often come this way,' he answered composedly, for he too had seen her afar off, and was quite prepared for the meeting. 'I was going to the farm to say good-bye.'

'Thank you,' she answered carelessly; 'you will find Mr. Palthorpe at home—at least I left him there about an hour ago.'

Mr. Hay did not immediately avail himself of this information.

'Taking a last look at English scenery, Mrs. Palthorpe?' he suggested, glancing expressively around.

'I! O dear, no. I am not going to leave England.'

'Not going to leave England!' He repeated the words after her, but seemed like one who failed to grasp their meaning. 'Why, what is the reason of this change? What has happened?'

'This has happened,' she said, interrupting him, and with the fire which had been lying smouldering in her eyes now blazing from them, 'that at last I and my husband understand each other. He is tired of his bargain, and I am sick to death of mine. I never meant to go to Australia. As I told him to-day, he must have been out of his senses to think I should go at present, at all events. Does he think, I wonder, I have not had enough of poverty here, without stranding the risk of being stranded with him away in that uncivilised country? Does he think he is the only one of us who repents his marriage? I have repented it, I can tell him. If I had known the misery I was bringing upon myself, I would have seen all the Palthorpes at the bottom of the sea before I would have had anything to do with one of them;' and as she finished this outburst Mrs. Palthorpe covered her face and sobbed aloud.

Utterly shocked and confounded, Mr. Hay stood silent. He did not know what to do, and he could not think of any word to say. It would not be going too far to declare he felt frightened.

When she told him she was going to remain in England, he felt stunned; and when she went on to indicate the motive of the quarrel which had taken place, he could only remain mute.

Again he felt as though he were dreaming that he stood with this woman under the arching trees. It was a bad dream and a dangerous one, from which he

must try to awaken without a moment's delay.

'And Mr. Palthorpe,' he managed to exclaim at last, 'is he not going?'

'Of course he is going,' she said. 'He can't stop at home and starve.'

'And, forgive me if I seem officious, do you not think in his state of health, to say nothing of other matters, it is your duty to go with him?'

'No, I do not,' she returned; 'and if you knew everything, you would not either; you would say it was my duty to stop at home.'

'But do you consider he is fit to go alone? Remember what a frightful illness he has had.'

'Do you suppose I am likely to forget it?' she answered; 'do you imagine I had nothing to bear either? And as for his going alone,' she proceeded vehemently, 'he will do far better without me. He makes friends fast enough, you need not be uneasy about that. But I am keeping you, Mr. Hay;' and she made a movement as though to continue her walk in the direction opposite to that from which Roding Farm lay.

'Shall you soon be returning home?' he asked, hesitating about leaving her.

'No, not at present; but don't let me keep you.'

If she expected him to stop she was disappointed.

'Then I will say good-bye now, Mrs. Palthorpe,' he answered; and, holding out his hand, looked wistfully in her tear-stained face.

'I suppose I can't put this matter right,' he said tentatively.

'Not unless you could unmarry us,' she replied bitterly, and turned away, still making as he watched that bright bit of colour in the sombre woods.

Mr. Hay went on to the farm. He did not mention Mrs. Pal-

thorpe to her husband, nor did Mr. Palthorpe make any mention of his wife, save to say he regretted she was not within.

'And I really do not know what time she will be back,' he added; a hint for the visitor perhaps, and one on which he was not slow to act.

'You have done more for me than I can ever repay,' said Mr. Palthorpe, as he stood taking leave of his benefactor. 'May I write and tell you how I get on in Australia?'

'O, you will have plenty to do without writing to me,' answered Mr. Hay; 'I shall hear of you through Doctor Dilton. Good-bye. I hope and believe you will succeed out there.'

'I hope I shall,' answered Mr. Palthorpe, 'better than I have done here. Good-bye, Mr. Hay, and God bless you. Some day perhaps I shall be able to tell you how I have felt your kindness.'

'Do not speak of that, please,' entreated the other; and then it was over, hurried at the last as all partings are. And while the daylight still lingered, Mr. Hay left Roding Park and took the road which led straight to the nearest station, eschewing the Forest and all that delightful sylvan scenery, of which Doctor Dilton made such honourable mention on the morning when, walking due west, he had been so suddenly addressed by the woman who was to spoil his life.

CHAPTER XII.

THE LETTER.

SOUTH of the Thames, in that part of London now known as a portion of the S.W. district, there were to be found for some years after the Great Exhibition many

pretty little houses in neighbourhoods that, although within easy walking distance of the City, seemed quite rural.

Many of these houses still remain, but their surroundings are rural no longer. One runs up against them in unlikely localities. There are some to be met with at the back of the Clapham and Brixton Roads, on the way to Wandsworth, round and about Camberwell and Walworth. Nay, I could name one street close to Upper Kennington-lane, where the passer-by, looking through the windows of the front parlours and the French windows of the back parlours, can catch a glimpse of green leaves and winding walks and well-grown shrubs in the gardens at the rear.

The London of that date bore all the traces of having been built less according to any orthodox plan than by individual fancy; and the same diverse personal characteristics which distinguished most of the thoroughfares before railways came and changed the appearance of all things stamped the suburbs, though perhaps with a fainter impression.

Now one man builds for many. 'Estates' are laid out for the habitation of future tenants as a workhouse or an asylum is prepared for the reception of its inmates. In these days the 'residence' no more indicates the preferences of the person who lives in it than a particular style of dress does the rank of the wearer.

Queen Anne houses are furnished with all sorts of incongruous articles, and often as not there is an utter absence of simplicity in the interior of a cottage.

It was different once. There used to be a certain correspondence between the exterior of a house and the proclivities of its owner.

Taste trained roses round the

windows, planted the wisteria, tended the jasmine till it grew over the gable of the little house. The gardener does all that now; he contracts for the creepers and the scarlet geraniums and the golden feather, which is only our old friend camomile under another name, just as the builder contracts to run up so many (un)desirable residences at so much apiece. He or his fellow takes you and your neighbour, and the neighbour next to him, and 'gardens' you each, as it is called, at so much a head. Town houses and town gardens are as much alike as two railway trains. The initiated can of course detect such small differences as nurses profess to do in twins, but to the ordinary observer the effect is a distressing monotony.

It was not so formerly—ere Norwood became a part of London, while Streatham still remained a village, when the way to Wandsworth was a pleasant country road, when the Surrey Gardens were not built over, and when Vauxhall with its fireworks, its lamps, and its fortune-teller had disappeared no longer than the great glass house in Hyde Park.

In a detached villa, then, in what is now the south-west part of London south of the Thames, there resided, some few years after Mr. Palthorpe's departure from England, a certain Mrs. Hay. It was a very pretty house—pretty, small, unpretentious, well set back from the somewhat narrow road in which it was situated, and screened from observation by a thick laurel hedge planted inside an iron railing, and also by handsome and numerous shrubs as well as by some fine old trees.

A nice little residence, somewhat dark perhaps as regarded the front windows; but charming at the back, with its garden well

enclosed, with its smooth grass-plot and many-hued flowers, its old-fashioned sun-dial (quite hidden away under the shade of the mulberry-tree), its ridiculous fountain, trickling, however, pleasantly into the stone basin, and making a cool murmuring music of its own in the warm summer weather.

On the afternoon, however, when the reader is asked to enter the gate and go up the broad path, and walk through the front door and cross the hall, it was not summer weather either at The Aspens, as the place was called, or anywhere else in England.

It was a dreary day in January; a biting wind raced down the roads and along the streets, and lay in wait at corners to pounce out upon unsuspecting passers-by. About the poorer neighbourhoods thinly-clad women went shivering over the pavements; infants in arms were crying with the cold; carmen ran beside their horses, trying to warm themselves while exciting the tired brutes to speed by the mere force of emulation. It was a dreary wretched afternoon without, one which made a snug house, a cosy room, and a bright fire seem all the more desirable by contrast.

But the lady who sat beside the fire in the drawing-room at The Aspens seemed to have no thought to bestow upon internal comfort or external misery. She sat close to the hearth, leaning a little forward in her chair, her head supported by her hands, staring straight into the blaze.

She never moved her position or stirred a finger even when the opening of the door must have told her some one had entered the room. She did not turn round or greet the new-comer, a man, by even a single word. He came quite close to her and laid his hand on her head, and still she did not speak.

'What is the matter? Are not you well, Mira?' he asked.

He bent down to catch her answer, but none came.

'Has anything happened? Are you ill?' he again asked, repeating the sense of his former sentence, while varying its sound.

She remained resolutely silent.

He could hear the ticking of the clock upon the mantelpiece, but he could not hear that she made any reply.

He drew her head a little round towards the light, and looked at her. For one swift instant she lifted her eyes to his, and then slowly let them droop till the long black lashes hid them quite; then, as his hold upon her relaxed, she turned slowly once again towards the fire, and resumed her contemplation of the blazing coals.

Evidently he had but just come in, and could form no idea as to what it was ailed her. Clearly also these fits of gloom or temper or regret were not uncommon, for he seemed more perplexed than alarmed by her unaccountable pre-occupation.

He walked towards the glass door which opened on the lawn, looked out into the cheerless twilight, came back with deliberation, and took up his position at the side of the mantelpiece opposite to that where she was sitting.

As he stands there with the firelight flickering upon his face—calm, erect, self-contained—you recognise him at once—him and her; you know it is the same man who walked westward some years previously very early upon a summer's morning; you remember that she it was who, from beneath the dark Portuguese laurel, spoke to and stopped him as he walked towards Stratford. Though it is winter now, and the scene altogether different, the scent of the flowers, heavy with night dews,

seems to float upon the air—gilly-flowers and carnations, roses and jasmine, the subtle odour of mignonette—all mingling with the sweet breath of the coming dawn; while, surrounded with mystery and bathed in an atmosphere impregnated with perfume, she stood in the stillness and majesty of the departing night, beckoning him to her, beckoning him to ruin!

He remained silent for a few moments, looking down upon the fair picture upon which the firelight flickered. She was not a woman who posed for effect. As has been said in an earlier chapter, Nature had not bestowed upon, neither had art taught her, those wiles and graces with which others of her sex heighten their charms or make up for lack of them; but unconsciously the attitude she now adopted suited well her face and figure, the remarkable beauty of the one, the supple lissomness of the latter. She was well dressed too—the folds of a rich silk fell over the white hearth-rug; she wore bracelets on her wrists, and precious stones glittered amongst the rings on her fingers. Lace, soft and creamy, made the soft fairness of her throat more attractive still; and a golden arrow was thrust with apparent carelessness through the coil of hair she arranged gathered into a great knot at the back of her shapely head.

A lovely woman truly—a sinner, but not a Magdalene. Any one with less idea of repentance never existed. She might regret the absence of a favourite dish at dinner, but remorse seemed to be a feeling she could not understand. Clearly, therefore, it was no sudden access of despair for wrong done—wrong which could never be righted—that was producing the symptoms the man who looked

down upon her failed to understand.

He thought he was acquainted with all her moods and tenses, but as he gazed he acknowledged himself mistaken. Never before, never, had he seen her sitting as she then sat, staring with that fixed hopeless expression into the fire, with her eyes full of unshed tears, and her fingers crushing all colour out of her delicate cheeks.

He drew a chair close to her, and sat down. He took her hands gently in both of his, and laid her head against his shoulder.

'Mira, tell me what it is,' he entreated. 'Have I done anything? have I vexed you?'

'No,' she said, with a gasping sob. 'No; O no!'

The years had changed and refined her voice. A life of ease and comparative luxury had rubbed little by little the external commonness off her speech and manner. Underneath them lay still doubtless the same nature, but its evidences were softened or obliterated. It was the same woman, and yet a different, as she who had paced the grassy glades of Epping, and roused at times in Doctor Dilton's honest breast a feeling of hatred to which he would have been ashamed fully to confess.

'What has happened, then?' he persisted. 'What is the matter?'

She raised her head and answered:

'He is coming home.'

'What?'

Their hands dropped asunder, and they drew back—he from her, she from him—as though a sword had parted them; and yet it was but the one word he spoke; the one word so eloquent in its anguish, its horror, its despair.

If the man himself had appeared before them it had almost seemed less terrible. Then there would have been something tan-

gible to grapple with; but now there arose a host of uncertainties, a thousand nameless terrors, the multitude of self-summoned accusers which dog the footsteps of the wicked when no living soul pursueth.

'When?' he asked after a pause, as though some long explanatory sentence had been spoken in answer to his exclamation.

'Immediately; he must be on his way ere this.'

Mr. Hay arose and paced the room. Up and down, up and down, blindly he threaded his way through the maze of furniture; he was not conscious of what he did; he wanted to realise that which was about to happen.

Aftersome time, for the twilight had gone and the evening was darkening down, he came back to his old position by the mantelpiece, and said gloomily,

'I must think what will have to be done.'

'I will never live with him again!' she broke in hastily. 'Nothing could induce me to do that.'

'Do you think he would want you?' asked her companion, with that awful plain-spokenness, that fearful candour, which at such a crisis does duty for a sneer.

'Of course I do, or he would not be coming back,' she answered, taking the question as literally as it was put, though not in the slightest degree in the sense it was intended.

'Ay, but he does not know,' said the other moodily.

'And he never need know,' she quickly retorted.

'He must know,' was the answer.

'Who is to tell him?'

'I will.'

He spoke the words perfectly calmly; but the blaze, leaping up at the moment, revealed his face, and showed with what an effort he uttered them.

She cowed a little; for once, for one brief moment, she forgot herself.

'He would kill you,' she said huskily.

'Let him; it is his right,' he replied.

Then ensued another silence; it was she who broke it.

'Could not we go away anywhere?' she asked timidly.

'No,' he said.

'Why not?'

'Because I do not choose it. That which I have done is done, and I must abide by the consequences—we must, rather;' and he shuddered as he spoke.

She rose and came to where he stood. She laid her hand on his arm, and though her touch made him tremble he would not shake it off.

'John'—she had never before spoken to him as she was speaking now—'you won't cast me off, you will not let him or any one take me away, will you?'

He looked out into the darkness for a moment, away from the firelight and the glow and the soft luxury, with a wild feeling of regret. O, for the might have been! for the sinless days of old! for that time to return which could come not back again, when choice was possible and a way of retreat open! for the conscience void of offence! for the thoughts and the hopes which might be his never more, never, never more! Then the spasm was over, the agony of memory quelled, and he answered, without tenderness, but without reproach,

'I have promised, Mira. You may depend I shall keep my word.'

'Let us go away,' she whispered.

'We cannot,' he returned.

'Besides, it would be but deferring the evil day. Let it come! I for one have been anticipating it long enough.'

'He will kill me,' she said, in an ecstasy of terror.

'You need not see him.'

'He will insist on seeing me.'

'I don't think you need fear that,' he answered; but she did not notice the cutting merciless remark.

'He will, I know he will,' she persisted, going back to her seat and resuming her former attitude of utter hopeless abandonment. 'If you won't go away, I shall. I dare not face him. John, do you hear me? I dare not do it.'

'I hear you,' he answered from the other end of the room; for once again he was pacing its length. 'Make your mind quite easy; you shall not face him;' then, struck by a sudden thought, he asked, 'How did you hear this? When did you know it?'

'To-day; he wrote to me.'

'To you? Wrote to you?'

'Yes, to me; he says he intends to leave almost immediately,' she added, with a little uneasy hurry in her tone.

'Give me the letter, I want to see it,' said Mr. Hay, coming close up to her.

'I have not got it here.'

'Go and fetch it, then, please,' his tone was more like a command than a request.

'What do you want to see it for?'

'I wish to see it; that is sufficient.'

'It is my letter, and I do not think you ought to ask me to show it to you.'

'It is my letter as much as yours, and I insist upon your showing it to me,' he retorted.

'I shall not do anything of the kind,' she said; and again she rested her face upon her hands and looked into the fire, but this time with the sullen stubborn expression he had learned to know so well.

There was a pause; during its continuance both were, after their

respective fashions, considering the position and gathering their forces.

At length he spoke :

'Mira, pray go and get that letter.'

She did not answer.

'Or tell me where I can find it, and I will get it for myself.'

If she had been possessed by a dumb spirit, she could not have taken less notice of his remark.

He hesitated for a short time; then he stepped across to where she sat, and said, with exceeding gentleness,

'Mira dear, don't be childish; we cannot disassociate our interests now. Fetch me that letter, I entreat of you—will you?' and he laid his hand imploringly on hers.

She threw it off angrily.

'I will not,' she declared; 'I would not if you went down on your knees and begged for a sight of it.'

'O, very well,' he said; and without uttering another word he took up his hat, which he had laid on a table near the fireplace, and walked towards the door.

This time he neither paused nor hesitated, neither did he look back. She turned her head and watched him curiously. No doubt she expected him to return; but he did not waver or, what would have been equivalent, speak.

He opened the door, he was in the hall; he would have left the house in another minute, when she started up, and cried,

'John.'

He did not come back; he stood still, and asked,

'What do you want?'

'To speak to you.'

'What have you got to say?' he asked.

'Come here, and I will tell you.'

He stepped back within the doorway, and, closing the door as

a matter of precaution, repeated his question.

'Come here,' she insisted.

'I will come,' he declared, advancing towards her with evident reluctance; 'but for your own sake I hope you are not trifling with me.'

She stood with her long dress trailing behind her, and her ornaments—ah, where was the goldsmith, cunning though he might be in his craft, who could tell the price that had been paid for those baubles—glittering in the dancing firelight, with her beautiful face looking upon him bitterly and scornfully, and her hands nervously tearing at the fastenings of her dress.

'You insist on seeing that letter?' she asked, in a low distinct voice the listener felt placed a restraint on every word.

'I wish to see it, certainly,' he answered.

'Take it, then,' she retorted; and drawing a paper from her bosom, tore it across, and then flung the pieces at his feet.

He did not make a remark; he stooped and picked up the fragments; then he stirred the fire into a blaze, and, pulling a low chair close to the hearth, read the letter through slowly and deliberately twice.

When he had finished, quite finished, he placed the letter in his pocket-book, and then said,

'I thought you told me you parted on bad terms.'

'So we did.'

'And that he never wrote to you nor took the slightest notice of your existence beyond sending that money which is accumulating in the bank.'

'Neither he did.'

'And that he never expressed the slightest desire for you to join him in Australia, or sent one single message which you could

construe into regret for your separation.'

'Neither he did.'

'And yet in this letter, which, indeed,' and his voice wavered as he spoke, 'is as touching a letter as I ever read in all my life, he speaks of others which have preceded it, of the coldness and brevity of your replies, of his own unabated affection, of his grief that the poverty into which he dragged you, and the trouble he caused at the time of his accident, should have changed the love he believed you once bore him into something almost dislike; and then he goes on to hope—O Mira, how can I repeat his words!'

'There is no necessity for you to try, surely,' she remarked as he stopped.

'That the day is not far distant when you will be able to tell him you are pleased to see him back in England; when you will be glad to pack up and return with him to a country where he can now manage to give you a beautiful home and provide you, though not with luxuries, with every comfort.'

'That is what he says,' she agreed defiantly.

'Then you have been deceiving me all the time,' summed up Mr. Hay; 'you have deliberately been telling me what was not the truth.'

'You have always been so truthful yourself,' she retorted; 'it is, of course, quite right you should reproach me.'

'I do not know what you mean or what you are trying to imply,' he said; 'but in any case it is no answer to my statement. Your husband never cast you off; never ceased writing to you; never entertained the idea of remaining in Australia without his wife. It was all false, Mira; all untrue from beginning to end.'

Nothing could well be more

sad, more hopeless, than his tone. Even she felt that, for she remarked,

'I said you had better not read the letter; but you would take your own way. I would have kept it from your sight if you had let me.'

He did not answer her. What need was there of speech between them? As she had sat looking intently at the fire, so he now remained with his eyes fixed on the glowing coals, and his thoughts wandering over the irrevocable past, and shadowing faintly out the uncertain future.

Before him there arose, as in a vision, a frank handsome face; handsome, though worn with illness, wasted by pain. A pair of honest blue eyes were raised to his thankfully; a faint voice spoke of gratitude; and now—and now—

He had never thought of wrong; and yet this was the end, or rather, for him, the beginning of the end. The man had trusted him; the idea of not trusting had not entered into his mind. What a home-coming! what a tale to greet one who had been striving and struggling in a distant land!

Had tears of blood availed, he would have shed them. O terrible awakening from the slothful sleep of sin! O woful dawn after the dark night of wrong! Dead Sea fruit! He had held it in his hand, all fair without, all foul within; sweet to the lips, sour to the teeth, pleasant to the sense, death to the soul!

If the man he wronged had seen him then he must have been avenged. Gloomier than the gathering night were the thoughts and memories crowding through his mind; keener than the cutting wind the pang which shot through his heart as he read the words of that letter, which could never be forgotten; louder than

the roaring blasts, which at times beat against the windows, the up-braidings of his conscience ; more dreary than the winter darkness the prospect his future presented.

He sat silent, looking into the fire ; and she sat silent also, watching him furtively.

For her, and such as her, there is no remorse, and no repentance. She dreaded, but she did not regret ; she feared, but she would not have retraced a single step of the road she had travelled.

Here lay the difference between them. The difference there is between the sirens who sing on the rocks, and the men who, plunging in to reach them, are engulfed in depths, over the darkness of which there lies a glamour of moonlight, that can never penetrate the darkness where they lie dishonoured and dead.

CHAPTER XIII.

HE IS DEAD.

FINE spring weather ; green leaves and white blossoms everywhere, in the London suburbs as in the far-away country ; a pleasant scent of rural odours pervading even the City thoroughfares, as itinerant vendors pushed their trucks laden with sweet-smelling flowers over streets still wet after refreshing showers from vanished water-carts.

Lilacs and laburnums in full bloom, hawthorn perfuming all the land, fruit-trees snowy with blossom ; Nature as fair as she could look, Nature as busy as she could be.

Warm weather for the time of year, bright sunshine chilled by no east wind. The breezes that spring came from the west ; it was a pleasant May alike for invalids and the robust on shore, and it

seemed propitious also for those returning to England by sea. No stormy nights, no tempestuous days ; the Atlantic like a mill-pond, so sailors just off the ocean declared in figurative language ; the Channel as smooth and clear as glass.

A joyous season for any one to come home, if he were likely to find anything joyful awaiting him on the threshold. English birds singing in the woods, English meadows green and fair stretching beside dreamy rivers, red-tiled barns, comfortable farmhouses, picturesque cottages, sleepy villages, old churches surrounded by moss-covered tombstones, all dotting the quiet landscape. A beautiful country, the memory of which has haunted many a wanderer sleeping and waking, and brought him over thousands of miles to look upon its face once more.

Mr. Palthorpe had not yet arrived, but the person who was called Mrs. Hay knew when she might expect him. She had been told the name of the vessel by which he meant to sail and the probable date when it would reach England ; so that whatever delights the lovely spring-time brought to others, to her it only proved a weary watch, a long dread.

If she could have run away, The Aspens had beheld her no more ; but she knew nowhere to run to. She was not the woman to cast herself desolate and penniless upon the world, to leave a warm fireside and a comfortable home, and go out into the biting cold to face an uncertain future.

But she was afraid—horribly. She awoke at night in an agony of dread. In the very slightest degree she did not understand the nature of the man she had married and wronged, and she feared his

vengeance as she had never feared anything before in her life.

She grew thin and worn; her face lost its former expression of calm indifference, and acquired one entirely fresh—that of sharp anxiety. She could not rest, she could settle to nothing. She could not bear to leave the house, and yet she did not like to remain in it. She suffered as only an intensely selfish woman entirely absorbed in the contemplation of her own danger could suffer, and her agony was all the keener because she dared not give expression to it. Even to her own soul she scarcely ventured to whisper,

‘If both cast me off, what is to become of me?’

For she feared poverty more than sin. She loved ease and comfort, to lie soft, to eat well, to be clothed in rich raiment, better than virtue. Sin, virtue; they were words that had no meaning to her.

Conventionally she was aware certain ideas were attached to them; but that those ideas should really influence the conduct of any human being seemed to her ridiculous.

There was, however, nothing ridiculous to her in the idea that she might have to leave The Aspens, and be compelled to return to an even worse poverty than that endured due east.

For as she had no gratitude, she had no faith in man’s justice, or generosity, or remorse. She could not understand any one of these qualities—gratitude, faith, justice, generosity, remorse. She was as free from all such sentiments as though she had been made of marble instead of flesh and blood.

How the man, tender of conscience, soft of heart, strong of purpose, weak in temptation, a merciless judge where himself

was concerned, too ready with excuses for the short-comings of his fellows, bore the days and the weeks and the months of that long ordeal, I could never hope to tell.

There are things no writer ever can tell, as for instance the passage of the hours between sentence and execution, between arrest and trial, between crime and arrest.

What he passed through whilst awaiting the arrival of that homeward-bound vessel left its mark for life on his outward man, and branded words known only to himself upon his inmost soul.

In that fair spring time he aged years—mentally, morally, physically. When the summer came, it was not the same man who stood in the sunshine as had looked at the snow. Sin deals very heavily with some people. Like smallpox, it is partial in its ravages; it pits and sears and marks most souls, but it passes lightly over others. He took the disease badly, and it struck deep into his very vitals. Never, truly it may be said, were the wounds it inflicted closed, the scars it left quite healed. He was very quiet, and very patient, and very repentant; but he never drank of any water of Lethe; he found no antidote powerful enough to undo the effect of the poison he wittingly swallowed, and which destroyed the peace and the happiness and the hope and the comfort of every hour of the future, that might have been so bright.

It was drawing very near: the days went by, the days full of actual sunshine, filled with beauty and perfume. It was time the vessel arrived; any hour, any minute he might return. Nay, even then the good ship might be in harbour, the injured husband hastening to meet the wife he might never greet more!

Mr. Hay sat in his office in the City, looking at the shipping intelligence; there was none that affected him. Well, the evil could only be considered as deferred.

He laid aside the *Times* and opened his letters; there was nothing in the letters which interested him. Alas, there was nothing in those days which could really interest him, save the return of the man he had wronged.

He pushed his letters away, and sat with hands folded on his desk, and head turned towards the window, lost in thought. Sunshine streaming into the room where he sat, moths dancing in the sunbeams. A stillness more complete than ever reigned in wood or meadow; for his office was situated at the back of his place of business, and gave only on an old City graveyard hemmed in by warehouses. Not a sound breaking the silence, not a person to intrude upon his reverie. For any stir or bustle of life, he might have been in his grave instead of in the heart of the City.

After a time the quiet seemed to affect him, for he started and drew the letters nearer to his hand, and was about to touch the bell, when his eye fell on a paragraph in the discarded *Times*, headed 'Loss of the North Wales.'

Something to interest him in that; something to cause the sunbeams to flicker and fade, and the room to reel round, and the light of day to go out and be replaced by darkness.

It did not last long. When the mental swoon—for the faintness was more mental than physical—passed away, he was still sitting in his accustomed chair, and quite alone; the paper before him, the sun streaming in at the window, the silence still unbroken.

'Loss of the North Wales.'

Ay, there it was in black and white. No delusion of the fancy; no illusion of the senses. Loss of the North Wales; the vessel in which Mr. Palthorpe was returning home. What had happened? what did the paragraph say? 'Left on such a date; encountered a gale in latitudes so-and-so.' What did that signify? He passed it over, and read on: 'Would not answer to the helm; drifted before the wind; sprang a leak; made signals of distress, and the steamer *Adrian* came to their assistance. Most of the passengers and crew saved. All might have been got off; but the sea ran so high two boats were swamped. Some of the rescued were transferred to a sailing vessel they fell in with a few days later. A list of the saved was appended. In it there appeared no such name as Palthorpe.'

A minute later, one of the clerks entering the room found his principal lying back in his chair white and trembling.

'Are you ill, sir?' he asked, hurrying to his assistance.

'Give me some water, quick,' was the answer feebly spoken.

A carafe and tumbler stood on the table, and after swallowing a little he seemed to revive.

'Shall I go for a doctor, sir?' asked the clerk.

'No; I shall be well in a few minutes.'

More than half an hour passed, however, before he recovered sufficiently to rise and walk across the room. When he did so, it was with the manner of a man who felt dazed and bewildered. He went to the window and looked out on the dreary burying-ground, on the slanting headstones and ruined monuments, encrusted with soot and grime and dust, and the inscriptions they had once borne almost obliterated.

If the news which had come to him were true, the man whose return he dreaded lay in a wider grave. The waves were buffeting his body as fortune delighted to buffet him in life. He could return no more, to be broken-hearted, to find his home desolate, his wife false. He could seek no revenge, ask no reparation.

His short day was ended, and he would never know of the night that had shrouded it. Whilst they had been dreading his return the winds and the waves were singing his requiem; he would not trouble any one any more; the story, so far as he took part in it, was finished; his tale was told; his sun had set!

After a little Mr. Hay went out. At the end of the street he hailed a cab, and drove to the owners of the *North Wales*. They had further particulars; they knew all they supposed they ever should know. The captain was amongst the saved; he was very ill, and lay at Southampton. Substantially the report in the *Times* was correct in every particular. Mr. Palthorpe was not amongst those saved; he chanced to be in one of the boats that were swamped. The second mate, who had come to London, saw him go down. There were not many passengers. No hope could be entertained that Mr. Palthorpe survived. The mate had particularly lamented his fate; he was from the same part of the country, and spoke affectionately of him as the 'young squire.'

It was a bad business, but not so bad as it might have been; for if the *Adrian* had arrived a couple of hours later, not a living creature would have returned to England to tell the tale.

Yes, the mate could be seen in London; the captain, when sufficiently recovered to receive strangers, at Southampton.

'You may, however, I fear,' finished the ship-owner, 'take my assurance as correct that Mr. Palthorpe went down.'

'Still it will be a satisfaction,' murmured his visitor.

'Precisely so; I can perfectly understand your feeling. Was the poor gentleman a relation?'

'No, not a relation; only—only—a—' friend he was going to say; but the phrase seemed unsuitable; he had to find another word—'only an acquaintance. I was greatly interested in him, however. I think I will see the mate, and afterwards probably run down to Southampton.'

Still with that dazed feeling upon him he walked out into the street, and, hailing another cab, told the man to drive to *The Aspens*.

There the lilacs and hawthorns were all abloom; there the white spring flowers were dotting the ground like cushions of snow; the air was fresh and sweet and full of all pleasant scents, and the sky was as blue and unclouded as though the season had been summer and the country not England.

But for Mr. Hay all these good things were in vain. He hurried up to the front door, and entered the drawing-room, which was empty. The French windows leading out into the garden stood open; and looking down one of the alleys he saw a figure standing near the fountain; a graceful lissom figure, dressed in black sweeping garments.

She stood motionless, regarding the water as it flashed up into the sunlight, and then fell in tiny showers back into the basin. She had no shawl around her shoulders, no covering over her head; there was something desolate and sorrowful and forlorn in her attitude and her repose—something unconsciously pathetic and lovely,

which caused the beholder to feel far more sorry for the erring woman than ever she had felt for herself.

He could not endure to contemplate her thus, overwrought, repentant, remorseful, stricken. He did not pause another moment, but went straight to where she stood idly looking at the water flashing and sparkling in the sun.

At sound of his approach she turned.

'What, you here!' she said, and the folds of her rich silk dress rustled on the ground as she moved so as to face him.

'Yes, I am here,' he answered; and the tone of his voice sounded strange and unfamiliar.

She moved from the fountain, and came close up to the edge of the grass where he had paused.

'You have heard something,' she said.

Between these two there was no need of much speech or explanation.

'Yes; I have heard something,' he answered.

He was white even to his lips, as she had been a moment before; but now the blood rushed into her cheeks, and deluged them with crimson as she cried,

'He has come!'

Mr. Hay shook his head.

'Have you not seen the paper this morning?' he asked.

'No; I never look at a paper. Why do you ask me?'

'Because there is news in it.'

'He is dead!' she cried.

'He is dead,' he answered; and they looked at each other for an instant in silence.

As if in a mirror, he, gazing on her, saw the reflection of what was in his own heart. He read it in her eyes, in the relaxed muscles, in the parted lips, in the expression of ineffable relief.

'My God!' he said, 'you are glad!'

She turned her head aside slowly, bent her eyes on the ground, and then replied,

'Yes, I am glad.'

For a moment neither spoke; the silence was not broken save by the man's laboured hurried breathing, and the notes of a bird singing blithely on a branch hard by.

All around them was beauty and repose. The leaves scarcely moved in the light wind; the drops of water falling from the fountain sparkled like diamonds in the air; a thousand sweet perfumes made the garden odorous. Everything was still and lovely; but vaguely the man felt there would be peace for him no more; that, as he advanced in life, he would be tossed by rougher tempests than that in which the dead man had been lulled to rest.

'Why should I be sorry?' the woman who had been that dead man's wife went on, after that moment's pause. 'We can say we are so if you like, but we should both know to the contrary. I am glad and you are glad. We are,' she persisted, as he made a deprecating gesture. 'Why should we be sorry? It is better for him too. If he had come home, what was there before him? He is better dead.'

Ay, better dead—ay, far, far better than to have his heart riven by the news which awaited his return—to find the restless ocean more constant than a woman—a feather in the breeze less fickle than she who had borne his name and lain in his bosom.

'But you were fond of him once.' Though that rejoicing and that indifference were both true, they so appalled him, he was forced to give utterance to an expression which had before escaped him.

Rather, ay a thousand times rather, would he have seen her, the tears streaming down her cheeks, her features convulsed with grief, than taking the tidings which had shaken him, unmoved by any sentiment save that of relief.

'You were fond of him once, surely,' he repeated.

'That was then and this is now,' she answered sullenly; and Mr. Hay stood mute.

That and this, was and is, then and now: if she had written a volume about the matter, she could not have put it more clearly before him, than in the seven words she spoke. It was for this—*this*, the man with all the best years of his life before him had given up wealth, station, and friends; it was for this he had let the old place pass away to strangers, and gone out himself to work for daily bread; for this he had laboured, and toiled, and saved, and planned; for this end—that the woman he loved, and that he married, should shed no tears for his loss, but say, with dry eyes and a smile of relief, 'He is better dead.'

The winds and the waves were kinder to the drowning man than the wife for whose sake he had given up his commission in the world's army and gone forth into the ranks. On the face of God's earth there is no creature so little pitiful as a selfish woman, and this woman was selfish to her heart's core.

Standing there, with the sunlight and the shadows playing at hide and seek around her—with her marvellous beauty set all about with the accessories of flowers, trees, sparkling water, delicious scents; with her smooth brow, her wealth of hair, her perfect features, her wonderful eyes—a painter would ask nothing better than to sketch her

as she was, without a change of position or of expression.

For her gaze was bent on the dim distance, as though, with all the power of a great mind, she was striving to solve some mighty question, some intricate problem—the regeneration of the human race, it might have seemed to an outsider. If she had been handed down thus to posterity, with no biography attached to the fair face, many a one in the time to come must have marvelled concerning the subject occupying her mind—the mystery of existence which was perplexing her.

'What did he die of?' she asked suddenly. She had not been thinking of him in the very least; but the matter she was considering chanced to bring her round to the fact of her widowhood.

Mr. Hay did not answer verbally; instead, he gave her the paper, pointing to that particular paragraph which had that morning come for a time between him and the sunshine.

Then he left her to read it in solitude; and going to the bottom of the garden, paced up and down a strip of grass wide and long which lay along the fence. He was thinking deeply. Heavens! he had something to think about, while the birds sang loud, and the fountain glittered, and the flowers bloomed, and light white clouds sailed peacefully over the blue sky—something he should never forget till he could hear and see no sound or sight of earth any more.

She came to him hurriedly, came down the broad smooth walk with rapid steps, holding the paper in her hand.

'John!' she cried, and he heard her breath was short and quick as his had been when he began to tell his news.

He stopped, and she drew close

to where he stood. 'It may not be true,' she went on; 'he may come back after all.'

He looked at her for a second, and then turned away. Again he saw, as in a mirror, the reflection of that terrible thought, which had passed through his own heart. *She was afraid he might come back. She hoped he was dead.*

He had feared the man might come back. He hoped he was dead. Not darkly, but face to face, he beheld the features of that awful dread and frightful desire. With the mask for a moment torn aside, he saw the loathsome spectacle of his inmost feelings changed from their former integrity, all the honour destroyed, the purity vanished, eaten away, slowly but surely, by the cancer of sin.

'How are we to know he has not been saved somehow?' she asked, finding he did not answer her previous remark.

With an effort the man spoke.

'He was in one of the boats that were swamped,' he said hoarsely. 'He was seen to go down.' And then unable to bear more he went into the house, covering his face with his hands, and ejaculated rather than prayed, 'O God, forgive me! O God, help me!' the while his head was bent before the Maker he had offended.

As for Mrs. Palthorpe, she sat down on a garden-bench, and considered over and over again the question which had before been occupying her mind.

'Will he marry, or leave me? Will he leave, or marry me?'

Ceaselessly as a child repeats some rhyme she rang the changes on those words.

A few hours before, the question had seemed comparatively remote; now it was one which could not be evaded or delayed.

ON SOME QUAIN'T CUSTOMS.

THERE is no doubt that we are, as a nation, essentially Conservative in thought and feeling. We love what is old, what precedent has allowed, what antiquity has preserved, what history has commemorated. When some comparatively new thing has to be done, we do not rely upon our own sense and judgment for the conduct of the affair, but we search back into the past for some course which precedent has sanctioned. Unlike America, we have little confidence in our own administration of matters, unless backed up by authority. Yankee Doodle sneers at the past, and, contrary to John Bull, believes only in the active go-ahead present, which must open out into a glorious and triumphant future. Lord Palmerston, in one of his election speeches, happily hit off the difference that existed between the two countries. In England, he said, if a man takes an inn he calls it the Old Hat, or some name which implies that the hostel is no brand-new affair; and if a rival comes into the field he does not call his opposition establishment the New Hat or the Renovated Bonnet, but he seeks to out-Herod Herod, and so, to make what is ancient still more ancient, he styles his house the Old, Old Hat. In America he would christen the caravanserai by some title which would savour little of the past, but much of the modern. With us antiquity has its sentimental side as well as its historical; in the States, where there is no history, it is the future which is softened by sentiment, not the past.

I am led to make these remarks whilst staying with one who has had the misfortune to have had his name pricked as High-Sheriff for his county. Like many of the landed gentry who can boast of a fair descent, my friend has quite enough to do with his money. What with the charges upon the estate for the payment of his sister's portion, farms thrown upon his hands, remitting of rents during seasons of agricultural distress, the constant repairs and improvements he is called upon to perform, charities, local subscriptions, and the like, he is, to put it kindly, far from a Croesus. In vain he raised his voice in remonstrance against being elevated to the office; there were many men in the county—new men, it is true—who would be only too pleased to occupy the post, who would spend their money with profusion, and whose wives would be immensely delighted at the honour conferred upon their husbands. But the judges, 'on the morrow of St. Martin,' did not send in the names of these *nouveaux riches* to their sovereign; they chose my friend with two others, and, as luck would have it, *mon ami*, because in this funny world he did *not* want what so many were scheming after, was selected.

And now for a whole year his life is to be one of worry and pecuniary anxiety. A shy man, hating publicity and indifferent to honours, he is to be the first man in his county, a great magnate, and taking precedence during his term of office of even the

Lord-Lieutenant. Content with his modest duties as a 'beak,' hesitating in his speech, fond of the quiet and seclusion of his home life, what, he piteously asks, has he done that he should be subject for a whole year to this torture? What is the use of the office? He does nothing; and whenever by chance there is anything to be done, it is his attorney, the Under-Sheriff, who has that task to perform. He is only an ornament, useless to the country and a needless expense to himself. 'Begad,' he sighs, 'it is enough to make a man a Radical and go in for reform all round!'

As his guest, I commiserate with him in his misfortune. He had been saving up a little money during the last year to build a stone wall round that part of his park which abutted on the village road, and to drain an outlying farm, and now this sum would have to be expended in sustaining a useless dignity. He has had to put his servants in new liveries, and to add to his establishment. Some men perform the duties of sheriff in a very shabby manner; but the pride of my friend here steps in, and as the thing has to be done, he is of opinion, for the sake of his name, that it should be done well. He has a chaplain, and of course has presented him with a handsome silk gown; 'that doesn't cost much,' says he, 'though for the money I could have put up those gates at Durlough' (a farm very much dilapidated). The contents of his stable and coach-houses are unsuited to his new dignity. He has hired from a London maker an imposing carriage, and from a well-known jobber in town horses about seventeen hands high.

If my friend hates his part, he acts it very well. The assizes have

been opened at the neighbouring town, and there the high-sheriff has had to proceed to attend upon the judge. How I pitied him as he paced up and down the little office of the attorney, nervous and fidgety, before being driven off to the house of the administrator of the law! Got up in his deputy-lieutenant's uniform he looked very stately; but those who knew him could see the funk he was in, for the judge on this particular circuit, having risen from the lowest round of the law, was exceedingly lofty, and exacted considerable homage from all who had to attend upon him. It was reported that in this very town he had reprimanded a former sheriff like a servant, because something had gone wrong or some little inattention had been paid him. Of course it is perfectly right that the judges, as representatives of the sovereign, should be treated with every dignity and respect; but do we not sometimes go a little too far in this matter? After all, is not the high-sheriff an officer representing the Crown, and why should he be called upon to play so submissive a *rôle* before a judge? 'Just like a flunkey!' moans my friend. I look out of the windows of the under-sheriff's office, the chaplain sitting on a chair close to me, resplendent in his new gown, reading the newspaper, and I see some one quite as nervous, only with more temper about him, as my friend. It is Newmman, the excellent coachman of the high-sheriff. At first it was difficult to recognise him. A most respectable man, with the slight failing of his class for beer, he holds the proud post of sergeant in the local Volunteer force. With the permission of his master he has for the last few months been doing his best to grow a moustache, and at last had suc-

ceeded in developing a most wonderful tooth-brush sort of article, very black and standing straight out like bayonets ready to receive cavalry. But man proposes! The care and cultivation of the last few months have been expended in vain. Not only had the moustache to go, but the whiskers, the object of adoration in every servants' hall for miles around, had also to be shaved. Behold him now seated on the box of the hired coach, in front of the jobbed horses, in all the bravery of his new livery, stockings, and well-fitting wig. Yet is he livid with rage. The policemen, who do the duty of the javelin-men of old, have not yet come up, and a crowd stands around the coach and chaff unmercifully the shorn Jehu. 'Hallo, Newman! nothing like lots of cheek, eh?' 'Cold about the gills, old man?' 'As you was, sergeant! wouldn't you like to be?' 'Don't you take it so to 'art, old cock! a little gunpowder and lard, and you'll be all right again!' 'Blest if he ain't had all his 'air taken off! what are yer suffering from, eh? pimples?' and so on. Newman looks at the jokers as if he were afraid of them, and yet would like to get down and give them a thrashing all round. In the glitter in his eye I fancy I can detect beer.

And now the police move up and surround the coach, the high-sheriff gets in, then his chaplain, and the vehicle drives off to take up the judge. Off I hasten to the court, and stand upon the steps outside the building. Soon the carriage drives up, the sheriff gets out, and precedes the judge clad in his robes up the steps. 'I feel like a beadle,' mutters my friend as he passes me. A rush is made for the inside of the court. There on the bench is my lord, and there

next him is the sheriff. The judge is talking to him, and pointing to the little brass candleholders that jut out from each side of his desk. Something wrong evidently. I see my friend flush up and quit the bench. 'What is the matter?' I ask. 'Wrong sort of candles—they are composite, and he wants wax; ought to be a grocer for this kind of business,' he replies as he hurries off. Unhappy useless dignitary! There he sits during the whole day, listening to tedious and perhaps sickening details of crime, breathing a fetid atmosphere, till the assizes are at an end. He has to entertain the judges; he has to take a prominent part in all county matters; he is the sovereign of his shire for the time being; he is an important guest at all festivities; he may even have to hang a man. Yet in reality what practical use is he? Why should the office continue to be a burden to many men who can ill afford it, and an empty dignity to those who can support it? Every county has its lord-lieutenant, its deputy-lieutenants, and its bench of magistrates; surely a shire, however turbulent or active, ought to be able to be controlled by these functionaries, without calling on an additional officer? But no: we cling to the past, and because a high-sheriff in the olden days, when men were more aggressive than they are now, when robberies and depredations frequently took place, and nobles exercised their feudal rights, was a real and useful official, so we in these days of civilisation, police regulations, and regular administration of the law, deem it right that he should still be in existence. Therefore, *O mon ami*, you may plead in vain! You have been pricked as high-sheriff: you may be unsuited for its duties, your rent-

roll may render you unfit for the post, you may have hitherto led a life of rigid seclusion ; but all your excuses will be useless, and you will have to serve—unless you prefer to pay a handsome fine.

There is another institution as superfluous as the office of high-sheriff. We have judges and juries, both petty and special. Of what use, pray, is that body of men which, when sworn, is loftily styled the Grand Jury ? All that it does could equally be performed by the ordinary jury. It seldom throws out a bill ; for every case brought before it has been well considered by a magistrate previous to being sent for trial ; it listens to evidence which will have to be repeated ; its decision means nothing ; and it is only, to men actively engaged in business, another word for a waste of three days. Why not let it be abolished, together with the various other anachronisms that surround this practical, utilitarian, nineteenth-century life ? Look around and see how the relics of the past cling to us without serving any available purpose. There was a time within the memory of men now not middle-aged when bishops wore wigs ; they now wear their own hair, to the cool comfort of themselves, and without endangering their episcopal authority. Why should not the bench and bar follow their example ? Why in a fetid court and on a sweltering summer day should a barrister be compelled to plead in court in a hot and heavy wig ? and why should forensic etiquette command a judge to be swaddled up in coloured and ludicrous robes as he listens from the serene heights of the bench to the pleadings below ? No unprejudiced mind will say that such costumes give a dignity to the judge, which it would be unwise to deprive him

of ; on the contrary, they tend to lower him by making him an object of ridicule in the eyes of the public. How infinitely more stern and majestic the judges appear when deciding cases in a simple black gown ! Abolish the ugly and bald-producing wig, and we shall have one anachronism the less amongst us. Our dandies do not go about in lace, ruffles, and velvet, with a clouded cane in their hand, and a jewelled sword at their sides. Why should the bar and bench maintain a costume which, to the modern way of thinking, is equally obsolete ?

In one important matter, however, reform seems imminent. Our marriage laws appear at last to be on the eve of alteration. What can be more dull than the ordinary marriage ceremony ? The service and festivities take place at a time which, without exhausting the day, cuts it up and completely wastes it. The religious service is to be performed before twelve ; who does not know the weary hours that precede the breakfast, the sad consequences of taking champagne freely in the middle of the day, the dubious hilarity, the departure of the principal performers in the ceremony, the break up of the affair ? And then what to do ? The day is wasted ; you cannot dine, you are unsettled ; and the probability is you go to the club and fall fast asleep over a book, and thus to your day's misery add a long and restless night. All this, it is hoped, will now be changed. In the old days of the disgraceful Fleet marriages the law did good service in limiting the hours during which the ceremony might be performed. But why should any limitation now be in force ? How far preferable in every way would a marriage be performed later in the day, with a dinner instead of

a breakfast, and the happy couple starting off for their hotel or country house in the sentimental gloaming of the eventide instead of in the staring and inquisitive glare of the afternoon! And whilst on this point, could not the marriage reformers overhaul the marriage service, and in fact generally curtail the whole of the clerical ceremony?

From the parson to the squire is but a step. There is one curious custom which we should do well to abolish without delay. Ever since men have been able to read and consider, 'justices' justice' has been a byword and a reproach. Why should a man, often with no legal training, and occasionally even below the rest of the community in intellectual attainments, simply because he holds property in the neighbourhood, or occupies a conspicuous position in the district, be put into the commission of the peace, and lay down the law for his neighbour? He is neither a lawyer nor a judge, yet he calmly, with the aid of the indispensable clerk, performs the duties of both functionaries. Hence we hear of those peculiar decisions which jar against our humanity and sense of justice. In one county we read of a sentence of six weeks' imprisonment passed upon a hungry vagrant who, wandering in a field, steals and eats a few turnips; whilst in another county, a drunken man who has half murdered his wife,

with the assistance of his boots and a handy poker, receives eight days' hard labour. Punishment appears to be inflicted haphazard and on no settled terms. Such anomalies could not exist if the law was administered by proper and qualified agents. Why should our great towns be ruled by the decisions of stipendiary magistrates, whilst our smaller market-towns are left to the tender mercies, and often crass ignorance, of justices of the peace? It is a relic of the feudal ages that can well be relegated to the lumber-room of other feudal relics. Throughout the land stipendiary magistrates should be established to dispense justice according to the text of the Statute-book, and not as the sympathies or prejudices of the individual may dictate. Dogberry is not such an ornament to the country that we should be anxious to preserve him.

To wade through the list of quaint customs which we still follow in our social and political life would be too long a task. An old country like ours, with an historical past, and in which freedom has slowly broadened down from precedent to precedent, must of needs preserve much of its antiquity in many of its customs and observances. But when such customs are at variance with the practical spirit of the age, he is no friend to his race who gives his vote in favour of their preservation.

NOTHINGS.

ONLY some withered blossoms,
Crumbling to dry decay ;
Only a glove half torn in two,
And idly thrown away ;
Only a heart that's breaking—
That is if hearts could break ;
Only a man adrift for life,
All for a woman's sake.

Only a few such tokens
Prized by a love-sick fool,
Naught but the ashes that strew the ground
When love's hot flame grows cool.
Not the first man by thousands
The dupe of a heartless flirt ;
Not the first time that priceless love
Was treated like common dirt.

Only in jest! You know it
Now, though it's rather late ;
Rather too late to turn in your life
And seek another fate.
You're not a man like thousands,
With a heart that will veer and twirl,
And feel a glow at the word and glance
Of every flirting girl.

Finished for ever, and done ;
Wrecked by a treacherous smile ;
Following madly a will-o'-the-wisp,
Happy, if but for a while.
Only a heart that's broken—
That is if hearts could break ;
Only a man adrift for life,
All for a woman's sake.

G. H. C.

LOVE AND WAR.*

BY R. MOUNTENEY JEPSON,

AUTHOR OF 'TOM BULLKLEY OF LISSINGTON,' 'A PINK WEDDING,' ETC.

CHAPTER VI.

MR. BUDDLECOMBE was no exception to the general rule that every man has two sides to his nature. The one first presented to the reader happened to be the rough side; but, as already stated, or rather implied, Mr. Buddlecombe had a smooth one, and it is now the pleasanter task of the chronicler to show our worshipful mayor *this* side uppermost.

Between the gentle zephyr fanning the soft cheek of a fair maiden and the fierce hurricane devastating all in its path there is not much more difference than between Mr. Buddlecombe as he is now about to appear, and Mr. Buddlecombe as the reader last saw him, dashing his newspaper on the floor, giving his servants warning all round, railing at the defenders of his country, abusing the friend of his youth, storming at the wife of his bosom, and fiercely hurling at his innocent offspring such epithets as 'Prattling idiot' and 'Babbling booby.'

It has been deemed advisable to open this chapter with the foregoing preliminary remarks, as the reader would not otherwise recognise Mr. Buddlecombe in the dapper beaming old gentleman who now entered his own snug library, resplendent in a snowy shirt-front, white waistcoat, glossy

pumps—in short, dressed for dinner.

It is common to most fidgety old gentlemen to become happy and docile after dinner; but Mr. Buddlecombe had lately, by taking a leaf from Akenside's *Pleasures of Imagination*, hit upon a method of snatching an anteprandial dream of joy from life's fitful sleep.

'Ah, little Florrikins,' he said, on entering the room, this mode of address, if frivolous for a mayor, being still a marked as well as remarkable improvement on 'babbling booby,' 'it was a bright idea that reading over the *maynoo* together every evening before dinner, wasn't it, you saucy little puss?'

'Yes, papa dear, a very bright idea,' acquiesced Florence, adding aside, with a surreptitious pout, 'Horrible sacrilege, reading a nasty bill of fare after Algy's *billet-doux*!'

'And here in this nice little room, replete with every comfort, we are always secure from interruption,' continued Mr. Buddlecombe, beaming all round him. 'The half-hour immediately preceding dinner is usually the heaviest period of the day, but *noos avong shongshay toot cela*. How the possession of a French cook does brush up one's French, to be sure! One seems to be, as it were, absorbing the language into one's very system. It is certainly a delightful way of acquiring a foreign tongue, and is immeasurably superior to Ollendorf's method

* The author reserves to himself the right of dramatising this story, or any portion of it.

after this manner: "Do you love the white hat of the virtuous chimney-sweeper? *Answer*: No; because my fine grandmother has eaten the green parasol of the magnanimous cabinet-maker." That was the style of thing I used to hear you at with your governess, eh, Florry?"

'Yes, papa dear.'

'We spend this half-hour very pleasantly together in the calm joys of anticipation, don't we, little Florry?' said Mr. Buddlecombe, as he playfully chuckled his daughter under the chin, and then took his seat in an arm-chair.

'Yes, papa dear,' acquiesced Florence, adding aside, as she seated herself on a low stool by her father's chair, 'To me this half-hour to-night will be the most trying I have ever passed.'

'I have considerably enhanced the pleasures of the evening by abstaining from lunch lately,' chuckled Mr. Buddlecombe; 'for, as the poet sweetly observes, "Abstinence makes the heart grow fonder"' (patting the lower portion of his waistcoat)—'fond foolish heart!'

'*Absence*, papa dear, the poet said; 'not *abstinence*,' remarked Florence.

'Well, darling, it's all the same,' said Mr. Buddlecombe, patting his daughter's golden head with a tender playfulness. 'By absence he of course meant absence from a meal; and what is that but abstinence? Ah, Florry, Florry, you matter-of-fact little puss, you've no soul for poetry.'

'O, how I wish papa would look at Algy in the light of a *pâté de foie gras* or a *Périgord pie*!' sighed Florence, as she turned to the table for the *menu*.

'Now, Florry,' said Mr. Buddlecombe, leaning back in his chair, crossing his legs, and bringing the

tips of his fingers together, 'commence, my dear. And, Florry, read, you know, as they say in your music-books, *con expressione*, *con MOLTO expressione*, my child.'

'What a dreadful old *gourmand* this French cook is turning papa into!' murmured Florence behind the *menu*. 'His voice is actually trembling with emotion, and he's turning his eyes up as if he were saying his prayers!'

'Go on, Florence, and pay great attention to your elocution, my dear.'

'*Potages*,' began Florence, in resigned tones.

'Stop, Florry. There should be no extraneous distractions. I've sat on my bunch of keys. There, that's all right. Proceed, my child.'

And Mr. Buddlecombe composed himself to listen with a rapt expression of countenance.

'*Potages*.'

'*Potages*,' softly echoed Mr. Buddlecombe.

'*Tortus claire*.'

'*Tortoo claire*: Clear turtle. Very good.'

'And *consommé de volaille aux quenelles*.'

'*Congsomay de*—I say, Florry, that's a stumper. What does it mean?'

'I don't know exactly, papa dear.'

'Neither do I. It will be a pleasant surprise, no doubt. It sounds delicious.'

'*Poissons*.'

'*Poisong*: Fish. Good.'

'*Turbót, sauce Hollandaise; saumon racolé à la Tartare*.'

'Aha, that's the Tartar I like catching,' gently interpolated Mr. Buddlecombe, with a soft smile.

'*Entrées*.'

'*Ougray*: Come in. Come in, by all means,' said Mr. Buddlecombe, with a playful and peculiar significance, as he tapped a waistcoat button.

'*Suprême de volaille aux truffes; filets de pigeons de Bordeaux; purée aux champignons.*'

'Read that again, Florry,' said Mr. Buddlecombe, in tones of gentle ecstasy; '*ongcore, oncore*, my sweet child. It falls softly and soothingly on the ear like evening bells, dinner-bells.'

Resignedly Florence acceded to the *encore*.

'What a beautiful language French is! it appeals so to the heart,' said Mr. Buddlecombe, again laying his hand tenderly on the lower portion of his waistcoat. 'Proceed, little blue-eyed sweetener of my old age.'

'*Côtelettes de mouton à l'Anglaise*—well, I suppose in plain language that's mutton-chops,' said Florence, laying the card on her knee and looking up at her father, who started as if a serpent had stung him.

'Florence, you disgusting booby, hold your tongue!' he exclaimed.

'O, of course, I recollect the romantic episode of the mutton-chops and the mastiff,' muttered Florence *sotto voce*, as she turned away her head to conceal a smile.

'Ring the bell, Florence,' said Mr. Buddlecombe, adding aside, 'I must take something to wash down that disagreeable reminiscence.'

Florence rose, rang the bell, and resumed her seat.

'I did think,' said Mr. Buddlecombe, tapping the carpet furiously with one foot, 'I *did* think that when I had a French cook I should not have such things as mutton-chops for dinner. Or if such an abomination as a mutton-chop were presented at my table, it would have been so disguised that its own sheep would not have known it. But *à l'onglay* evidently means the article in all its normal repulsiveness of gristle and

fat. O, you know, the fellow ought to have his salary cut down to that of a major-general, or whatever those old cutthroats in cocked hats call themselves.'

At this point the obsequious Spigot entered the room in response to Florence's summons.

'Spigot, sherry and bitters. And *do* look sharp; that is, if your natural cast of countenance does not render that an impossibility,' said Mr. Buddlecombe.

'Certainly, your worship,' said Spigot, hastily withdrawing.

'*Revenons à nos moutons*,' said Florence, a little spitefully, 'I fear. *Relevés*—'

'*Revnong à no moutong*, indeed! Don't dare to do anything of the sort. Hold your tongue, miss; and don't go on until I tell you.'

'Good gracious!' thought Florence, with a fearful sinking at heart; 'if such a trifle puts him out in this way, what will he do, O what *will* he do when the announcement, which may be made at any moment, that an officer from the barracks is actually in the house breaks rudely in upon his dreams of *tortus claire* and *volaille aux truffes*?'

Fortunately—for the present at all events—the oil—in the shape of sherry and bitters—which was to be poured on the troubled waters of Mr. Buddlecombe's soul speedily arrived; and with the first sip he became not only calm, but even placid.

'Well, well,' he remarked, without the least signs of the recent passion, which had come and passed with the suddenness of a Mediterranean squall, 'there is no rose without a thorn, and no *may-noo*, I suppose, without a bitter pill. Now go on, Florry; *con molto espressioni*, don't forget that, my child.'

'*Relevés: Chapons rôtis au Périgord.*'

'Good again. Capons roasted as they do them at Périgord. By the way, Périgord is a town in France, is it not? You learned geography last, Florry.'

'Yes, papa, a town in the east of France, I think; famed for the manufacture of raised pies.'

'Yes, yes, yes, to be sure. Raised pies! what an elevated form of industry! Dear me, what a graceful little interchange of civic compliments, what a delicate method of cementing the *ong-tongte cordial*, it would be if the Mayors of Périgord and Puddleton were to present each other with specimens of the native industries of their respective towns! I'm sure I would give him as many buttons as he liked in exchange for an equal number of Périgord pies. I'll think over the matter. Go on, pretty little golden-haired solace of my sere and yellow leaf.'

'*Hanche de venaison aux—*'

'Hush, Florence. You read that over a *leetle* too hurriedly—I might almost say irreverently. We have now arrived, so to speak, at the very zenith of the cook's efforts, and we should not treat the same in a spirit of levity. *This is the way—*'

Here the Mayor extended his hand ready for emphasis, turned up his eyes, cleared his throat, and was just on the point of showing his daughter how to render rhetorical justice to 'the very zenith of the cook's efforts,' when Spigot entered the room, and threw the following metaphorical bomb-shell at his worship's feet:

'A gentleman wants to see your worship immediately on a pressing matter of business.'

'Heavens!' mentally ejaculated Florence, as she dropped the tiresome bill of fare, and clasped her hands; 'this must be Algy! Madness!'

'Wants to see me at this hour?'

said Mr. Buddlecombe furiously. 'Didn't you tell him I was engaged, Spigot?'

'I did, your worship; but he wouldn't go,' replied Spigot, glancing in astonishment at his young mistress, and wondering what on earth Miss Florence was tearing her pretty little lace handkerchief to pieces for.

'Wouldn't go!' said Mr. Buddlecombe. 'And I do wish to goodness, Spigot, that *you* wouldn't go rolling about your eyes in that way. Keep those idiotic ocular demonstrations till you've got a fit yourself, or want to frighten an old woman into one.'

'Certainly, your worship,' replied the meek Spigot, fixing his master with a winkless glare until his eyes watered.

'Who is it?' asked Mr. Buddlecombe. 'Who dares to come at this hour when— Don't stare like a stuck pig, Spigot!'

'Certainly not, your worship. I—I—I think, if you please, your worship, it's—it's—it's—a—a—'

'Do not stammer, Spigot. There are few things more irritating to a listener than stammering; and irritation just before a meal is to be specially avoided. It plays the deuce with the gastric juices. Who is it?'

'Well, your most worshipful worship,' faltered Spigot, surreptitiously laying hold of the door-handle behind him as a first step to a hasty retreat should circumstances necessitate one, 'it's a gent from the barracks, your worship.'

'An individual from the barracks! want to see *me*!' exclaimed Mr. Buddlecombe, jumping up; while Florence, trembling from head to foot, seized a book, opened it upside down, and pretended to be absorbed in its contents.

'Such is his outrageous request, your worship. Here's his card.'

'Why didn't you give it to me before?' said Mr. Buddlecombe, snatching the small piece of paste-board.

'Well, knowing your worship's dislike to the military, I thought it best not to be too sudden in the announcement, your worship,' explained Spigot, while Mr. Buddlecombe adjusted his glasses.

"Mr. Algernon Fitzmaurice Warriner, the Queen's Own Fusiliers," said Mr. Buddlecombe, reading the superscription on the card, which he held at arm's length and surveyed with upturned nose, as if it were something noxious and nasty. 'Now what, in the name of wonder, can Mr. Algernon Fitzmaurice Warriner of the Queen's Own Slaughterers, or whatever they call themselves, want with me? What, in the wildest flights of the human fancy, can Mr. Algernon Fitzmaurice Warriner of the Queen's Own Brain-spatterers, and the worshipful Mayor of Puddleton, be supposed to have in common?'

'I can see papa is working himself up into one of his paroxysms of rage,' murmured the pale trembling little Florence, as, with her head still bent over the reversed book, she anxiously gazed through her long lashes at her excitable parent. 'With his violent temper there may be murder. I'll remove everything that might offer itself to his hand as a weapon.'

And in this very merciful spirit of precaution Florence, watching her opportunities, succeeded in pocketing, one after another, such deadly engines of carnage as a paper-knife, a pair of scissors, and a bodkin.

'How can people be so reckless as to leave such things about!' whimpered Florence, as she pounced on the last, and pocketed it as if it had been what bodkins used to be in Shakespeare's time, a dag-

ger with which any one tired of life 'might his quietus make,' or any other man's. 'It's positively murder made easy.'

While Florence's hands were thus busily engaged, Mr. Buddlecombe's tongue was not idle.

'I call this invasion of my privacy an outrage, a brutal outrage. Is he sober, Spigot?'

'Well, as sober, your worship, as can be expected from the military. Leastways he conducts himself with tolerable propriety, considering.'

'I'm astonished at it. Is he in his senses, then?'

'Well, in as much as he's got, your worship, I should imagine.'

'Gracious!' mentally ejaculated Florence, with a shudder, 'there's the poker, papa's favourite weapon, I should think! I *must* have it. I daresay I'll be able to get hold of it and hide it while papa is engaged with that cringing old sycophant.'

'Where did you leave him, Spigot?' asked Mr. Buddlecombe.

'Well, knowing your worship's very proper antipathy to the military, I left him on the doorstep, your worship.'

'Old wretch!' muttered Florence, with a contemptuous glance at Spigot, as she sidled towards the fender.

'And a very proper place too, Spigot. And did you shut the door?'

'I did your worship.'

'In his face?'

'Right in his face, your worship.'

'With a bang?'

'With a most fearful bang, your worship.'

'Spigot, you may have your faults, but I must say there *are* occasions when you evince a great deal of delicate tact. I do not say that if you had kicked him down the stairs you would not have shown still greater tact. But we can-

not expect— Florence, what *are* you trying to do with that poker?

For a moment or two poor Florence was completely scared, and stood, mute and motionless, with the article in question behind her back, where she had whisked it just too late to evade her parent's vision.

'O, it's—it's—it's such a pretty poker, pa,' she at last stammered out, on recovering just sufficient presence of mind to make a wild attempt at an explanation. 'I was thinking it would make such a—such a sweet ornament for my *châtelaine*. Will you'—and here she placed her hands on his shoulders and looked coaxingly up into his face—'give it to me, papa dear?'

A strange unnatural calm, such as sudden and extreme bewilderment occasionally produces even on the most excitable temperaments, came over Mr. Buddlecombe.

'Does history furnish any records of insane mayors?' he gloomily asked, while Florence, with the poker still clasped in her hand, continued to hang on to his shoulders. 'Or is it reserved for me to figure as the first on that mournful list? I wonder, if I go mad during my mayoralty, whether they'll present me with a silver straitjacket? Here's my only child, on whose education no expense has been spared, and who has hitherto betrayed no marked symptoms of idiocy nor any special mania for fire-irons, beseeching me in tender and imploring accents to "give her the pretty poker, pa;" while simultaneously a member of the windpipe-slitting brain-spattering profession called the army drops in at the sacred hour of dinner, just for all the world as if I were dotingly fond of the species. It's really enough— Here, get away with

you! Put that poker down at once, Florence, and go up to your mother! Do you hear me? Put that poker in its right place, miss. Well, if you won't, I will.'

Snatching the poker from Florence, who at once began to cry, Mr. Buddlecombe excitedly threw it into the half-open drawer of the library-table, near which he was standing.

'There,' said he, as he closed the drawer with a bang, 'I'm the only one in the whole house who has got a head in an emergency, and keeps cool and collected. Go to your mother, Florence.'

'I can't leave them alone together,' sobbed Florence, as she moved towards the door, pouring her muffled plaint into a diminutive bundle of rags which ten minutes before had been a dainty little lace handkerchief. 'I'll go out, and then slip back behind that screen; and if Algy *does* come in, and papa makes a murderous onslaught upon him with the poker, I'll rush between them and receive the deathblow on my own head. "'Tis so for me that Algy'd do, and so will I for him.'"

This last beautiful sentiment was nearly choked with sobs.

'So glad I took the *other* things away, though,' she added, brightening up a little as she put her hand in her pocket, and felt the paper-knife, the pair of scissors, and the bodkin.

'It's impossible this individual can have any business with me,' said Mr. Buddlecombe, as soon as the door had closed on Florence.

'Quite, your worship,' said Spigot, whose anxiety to tell his master that he had put the poker into the table-drawer was restrained by a dread amounting almost to a certainty that he, the informant, would have it thrown at his head for his pains if he did so.

'It is some impertinent attempt at a vulgar practical joke. I sha'n't see him. Tell him to go about his business—that's to say if a military man *has* business anywhere.'

'Yes, your worship.'

'Here, take back his card. Say I don't want it. Now where the deuce did I put it? I must have dropped it in this drawer; I recollect it was open. He may keep— Now *do* look where Florence has put that poker; in the drawer, actually, of my writing-table, amongst all my papers! Could any one believe that a girl on whose education no expense has been spared could be so giddy? Confound the poker, and the card too! Here, tell the individual on the doorstep to go away.'

'Yes, your worship,' said Spigot, retiring..

'Here, Spigot.'

'Your worship.'

'You may put it rather stronger than that. Tell him to go to the —. You understand, Spigot.'

'Perfectly, your worship.'

'Stay a moment, Spigot. You are an old and faithful retainer of the family.'

'I am indeed, your worship.'

'At an early age, when a factory boy, you narrowly escaped being worked up into buttons, through being caught in the machinery.'

'Had I been, your worship, I trust that as buttons I should not have disgraced the firm.'

The Mayor of Puddleton was visibly touched.

'And I do further trust, your worship, that I should not have been military buttons, nor had any device or motto of a warlike nature stamped upon me.'

'O, do you know,' said the Mayor, quite carried away by this last, 'a person capable of such beautiful sentiments, no matter

how far-fetched, must not be sacrificed to military brutality. No, Spigot, I shall not expose you to the risk of delivering that message. It would probably lead to your being knocked down and trampled upon.'

'I should be proud of falling in your worship's service.'

'No, I prefer your standing up for me. Tell this individual to go away, and that if he *has* any business with me he can communicate it by letter to my office to-morrow morning. And further, impress upon him the utter hopelessness of any attempt on his part to obtain even a *transient* view of me this evening, much less an *interview*.'

'Very good, your worship.'

And Spigot was at last allowed to withdraw.

Gentle reader, I here pause at the conclusion of this chapter to ask you, in the language of the betting-ring, what odds you are prepared to lay against the successful termination of Algernon War-riner's design of dining this very evening with the Mayor of Puddleton, by that civic worthy's own invitation?

CHAPTER VII.

'O, do you know, one's digestive organs are completely upset by this affair,' testily remarked the Mayor on being left alone, adding, in a querulous whine, 'I haven't half the appetite I had. I'll try and coax it back. I'll just read over the *maynoo* quietly to myself. Where is it? Where is the *maynoo*? What *can* have become of— Well, I declare if it's not on the floor, where that Florence has dropped it, just as if it was a trumpery, stupid, meaningless love-letter. Could any

one believe that a girl on whose education— No, no one could, so it's no use asking the question.'

Having recovered the precious document, Mr. Buddlecombe, after comfortably reseating himself in his armchair, and adjusting his double glasses, addressed himself to its perusal. The effect was apparently most soothing. With the first anticipatory spoonful of the *tortue claire*, grim-visaged war smoothed its wrinkled front, and his brow became as clear as the turtle; and when in fancy he par-took of the *saumon*, it might be, but he was not, *à la Tartare*. There was nothing of the fierce Tartar nature about him then.

While he was thus absorbed the door was noiselessly opened, and, with a mouse-like footfall, Florence entered and ensconced herself behind a large screen, whose duty was to shield the Mayor of Puddle-ton from the public gaze when he condescended to be mortal, and wished to wash his hands without the trouble of going up-stairs. Of course this clandestine proceeding was the first step towards the fulfilment of Florence's expressed intention of receiving the death-blow on her own devoted little head, should her father make a murderous onslaught with his favourite weapon the poker on the gallant but rash Algernon Warriner.

Florence had only just settled herself in her hiding-place, and Mr. Buddlecombe's spirit had once more gloriously soared to the 'zenith of the cook's efforts,' *alias* the haunch of venison, when the door was again opened, and Spigot entered with the demeanour of a criminal on his way to the scaffold.

'If you please, your worship, it's not my fault, your most worshipful worship,' faltered Spigot.

'What's not your fault?' said Mr. Buddlecombe, tumbling down

in one moment from the above-mentioned zenith to the very nadir of dismay. 'Spigot, a fearful suspicion flashes through my brain that something has happened to the dinner!'

'O no, nothing quite so fearfully awful as that, your worship.'

The Mayor breathed again.

'I really thought,' he murmured, with that fluttering of spirit, half painful, half joyous, which generally betokens the only half-realised immunity from some suddenly threatened calamity, 'that the cook had had a fit, just at the critical moment when the *congso-may* or the *sooprane de volatile* most needed his delicate attention.'

'It's the young officer, your worship.'

The Mayor started, and in spirit, if not in word, he went as near an oath as a mayor's pure spirit can go.

'He's the most impertinacious creature I ever came across, your worship. He says he must see your worship.'

'Must see me!' burst forth the Mayor. 'Well, upon my word, that's rich! Tell him if he *must* see me he may apply his eye to the bottom of the street-door, and, if the door-mat doesn't interfere with his vision, he may feast his eyes on my evening pumps, which will be just about all he'll catch of me, as I walk across the hall to the dining-room.'

'He, he, he, he!' laughed Spigot for about fifteen seconds, with the regularity of a clock ticking; for Mr. Buddlecombe, who evidently thought this sally rather smart, had given him a glance which unmistakably conveyed the mandate, 'Be tickled.'

When people are very angry there is nothing so soothing, just for a passing moment, as the consciousness of having said a smart, or what they consider a smart,

thing at the expense of the person who has provoked their wrath. Mr. Buddlecombe almost smiled. Spigot was encouraged.

'He's a civil-spoken young gentleman, your worship,' he pleaded, as he instinctively placed his finger and thumb into his waistcoat-pocket, and tenderly manipulated a sovereign which had recently found its way there, 'a very civil-spoken young gent, and his manners lead one to believe he's moved in polite circles. He begs your worship will be good enough to read this letter.'

'O, all this abominable annoyance will utterly ruin my zest for dinner!' growled Mr. Buddlecombe as he snatched the letter. 'I'll take his letter, but tell him I shall not see him to-night, and not to call here again. My clerk will answer it, if it requires an answer.'

'Very good, your worship.'

And Spigot withdrew, only too glad to have earned his sovereign so easily; for, though he did not approve of soldiers, he was sufficiently a political economist to know that their money was as good as any other people's. He need not have read Adam Smith or John Stuart Mill to have mastered such a fact.

'Now I daresay,' said the Mayor, holding the letter at arm's length and looking suspiciously on it, 'that there's a cracker or a squib inside, warranted to blow the opener's eyes out. That's the military idea of a joke. I wonder,' he continued, as he drew forth his double glasses and adjusted them, 'that I have not received before this a box containing a choice assortment of door-knockers. That, I believe, is the usual military offering to the mayor of a town. Or woke up some morning and found the sign of the Red Lion over my portico.

Another military *jeu de spree*. Or a fine young donkey in my bed, alive and kicking, with Georgina's nightcap on! That is, I believe, the very *cream de la cream* of military *espieglerie*.'

By this time the glasses had been properly adjusted, and the envelope opened.

'Hallo! what's this?' he exclaimed, as, on the very first glance, his eye caught that magic little symbol £, with a good long tail after it. 'Confound that Spigot, running off in such a hurry!'

The bell was rung violently, and in a very few moments Spigot reappeared.

'Don't be in such a hurry, Spigot. This overdone assumption of nimbleness at your time of life is unnatural, not to say ghastly.'

'It is indeed, your worship,' said Spigot humbly, and out of breath.

'Wait outside until I call you in. I may have some message to deliver to this individual.'

The mandate was of course obeyed.

'Now what *can* this person have to say to me on money matters? At all events, I'll do him the honour of reading his letter.

"Sir,—Knowing the unfortunate, and on my part deeply deplored, prejudice you entertain towards my profession, I apprehend some difficulty in obtaining an interview with you. I have, therefore, taken the precaution of providing myself with this letter in the event of your refusing in the first instance to see me. The importance of my errand will, I hope, justify what must seem to you an unwarrantable intrusion. It is in my power, sir, to save you no less a sum than £30,000; and how this can be done I am ready to communicate to you at once, if you

will only afford me an opportunity of doing so in private.—I remain, sir, your obedient servant,

“A. F. WARRINER.”

‘Well, a more extraordinary epistle I never read! I do not know whether I should treat it with utter contempt, or afford this person the opportunity he solicits in, I am bound to admit, straightforward and yet respectful terms. It is quite within the bounds of possibility that he has, through relatives or friends, become possessed of certain information regarding some movements in the money market which may affect me to a considerable extent; and being anxious to curry favour with a personage in my exalted position—Anyhow, I’ll take a little time to consider what course I shall pursue. In the mean time, however, he may get tired of the doorstep. Spigot!’

‘Your worship,’ said Spigot, promptly reappearing.

‘I may or may not see this gentleman. Request him to wait a little; and in the mean time you may promote him from the doorstep to the library. I’ll ring when I want you.’

‘Very good, your worship.’

‘I think I’ll see him,’ soliloquised the Mayor, as Spigot closed the door. ‘If it’s an outrageous attempt at a hoax, I flatter myself there’s enough inborn dignity about me which, with the divinity hedging my office, will cause the attempt to recoil on the offender’s own head. But I’m talking nonsense. They would never dare to think of such a thing. To beard a Douglas in his hall! a lion in his den! a mayor in his own private residence! Preposterous! I’ll see him.’

Mr. Buddlecombe was just on the point of ringing the bell when his hand was stayed by a horrible

misgiving which then coursed through his brain, gathering strength step by step. ‘I am, and have been for a considerable time, a public character, and of course a fierce light has beaten upon many of my actions. When member for Puddleton I opposed every measure brought forward for the benefit of the army, on the grounds that there should be no army at all. I daresay I have made myself obnoxious to the military. I shouldn’t wonder if I’ve been burnt in effigy on numerous barrack-squares. My efforts may have retarded promotion or something of that kind, and this—this’ (here his spirit faltered) ‘visit may be prompted by motives of revenge. History repeats itself. Was not the Duke of Buckingham assassinated at Portsmouth by an officer of the army who considered his professional prospects had been blasted by that ill-fated nobleman’s policy? Portsmouth begins with a P; so does Puddleton! Buckingham with a B; so does Buddlecombe! Gracious! I may be on the eve of assassination!’

Having brought his analogical argument to this ghastly conclusion, Mr. Buddlecombe was seized with a panic, in which he was very nearly opening the window and invoking the protection of the police. A few moments’ consideration, however, induced a more dignified state of mind, and he was about to content himself with ringing the bell and directing his visitor to be shown out, when another glance at the letter made him hesitate.

‘An enormous sum! Quite a fortune! What *can* it mean?’

Finally greed and curiosity together settled the question, and Mr. Buddlecombe summoned Spigot.

‘Spigot, show the windpipe-slitter in.’

'Who, your worship?'

'The professional brain-spatterer.'

'I beg your most worshipful worship's worshipful pardon, but I don't quite—'

'You never *do* quite. The military individual, of course. That's the same thing, isn't it?'

'Certainly, your worship; *exactly* the same thing.'

'And look here, Spigot: intimate to him in the plainest of terms that I have only a very few minutes to spare. The dinner can be served when ready, and you can sound the gong with more than usual emphasis; and if that has no effect you had better come in at intervals of two minutes to remind me that the dinner's waiting.'

'Your wishes shall be scrupulously attended to, your worship.'

'I should think that would be a sufficient hint even to the most pachydermatous of military coxcombs,' soliloquised Mr. Buddlecombe, as Spigot departed on his errand. 'I feel I am quite right in granting this interview. Never throw away a chance, has ever been my motto and the key-stone of my success in life.'

Here the door was opened, and Algernon Warriner was shown in by Spigot. Notwithstanding the indignity he had been subjected to of being kept waiting for fully ten minutes on the doorstep, there was not the slightest evidence of chagrin or impatience about Warriner. He was dressed in evening clothes, and wore an overcoat, one sleeve of which hung down by his side empty. Many months before, in the Crimea, a fragment of shell had struck him on the right forearm, splintering both bones; and it was solely to that glorious combination of youth, pluck, and a good constitution, that he owed the preservation of the limb.

The wound might have healed ere this, but Algernon Warriner, as brave a youngster as ever wore the British uniform, had insisted on coming off the sick-list and taking his turn of duty in the deadly trenches long before he was fit to do so.

Many men who have been cool under an enemy's fire have found that 'interview with papa in the study' rather too much for their firm nerves. But young Warriner, as well as being dauntless in war, was daring in love, and, though his demeanour was courtesy itself, there was an unmistakable air of self-possession about him. There was one heart, however, in the room which was beating hard enough for his and itself as well, and that was Florence's, as she crouched behind the screen. Had Warriner been conscious of what was on the *other* side of the screen, *his* heart too might have accelerated its movement a little.

'I must apologise for intruding at such an unseasonable hour,' he said, with a polite bow.

'Never mind apologies, sir,' said Mr. Buddlecombe, stiffly returning the salutation and fussily motioning his visitor to a seat. 'I have a very few moments to spare, and, as a saving of time, will dispense with apologies and all other preambles. I have read your letter, and now, sir, I await your explanation of its extraordinary contents.'

'To give you that explanation, sir, is of course the object of my visit,' returned Warriner, with great deliberation, but also extreme politeness. 'The statement contained in my letter no doubt caused you some surprise. Am I not right in supposing so, sir?'

'I have already implied that it did, and still does, sir. Pray proceed a little quicker, sir.'

Warriner bowed with the great-

est courtesy, as if intimating that Mr. Buddlecombe's wishes on this score should be sacredly observed, and proceeded, with rather more deliberation than before,

'It may also have awakened in your mind, and most naturally so, I am bound to admit, some doubt as to whether I could carry out what I have professed myself able to do.'

'It did, sir. But I have given you the benefit of the doubt and granted you a hearing. Pray now give me the benefit of a little more expedition. My time is precious, sir.'

Here the dinner-gong was sounded by Spigot, according to his instructions, 'with more than usual emphasis.'

'Hooray!' mentally ejaculated Warriner.

'Very precious indeed, sir,' said Mr. Buddlecombe, as the brazen clangour died away; adding, in the silent depths of his heart, 'Why, the clear turtle will be congealing in its receptive tureen, and he hasn't even opened his case.'

'Pray excuse my presence at such an inopportune time, sir,' resumed the polite but terribly prolix visitor. 'The importance of the business on hand will, I feel sure, plead in my behalf, especially when I add my own expressions of regret that circumstances should have forced me into obtruding myself—'

'I've told you before, sir,' interrupted Mr. Buddlecombe, with a warmth of tone that brought Florence's little face peeping round the edge of the screen, with considerable alarm portrayed in it, 'I have told you before, sir, that apologies are only a waste of time. Now to the point. You say it is in your power to save me a very large sum of money. Out with it, sir, without any further beating about the bush.'

'Knowing how much more experience you must possess than I do, sir, in monetary as well as in most other mundane matters, and also having in view the difference in our ages, I feel it is the height of presumption on my part—'

'O dear, O dear, I wonder what the *congeomay* is *congeomaying* itself into!' muttered Mr. Buddlecombe, with a stifled groan, as he rose from his chair and took a turn up and down the room.

'—To remind you of the trite old proverb, "More haste, less speed." This is true in most—'

'Mr. Bolitho and Mrs. Buddlecombe are in the drawing-room, your worship, and the dinner's waiting,' said Spigot, throwing open the door and speaking as impressively as he could.

'That's capital; he can't stand the strain much longer,' mentally remarked Warriner, with an internal chuckle.

'There, sir, do you hear that?' said Mr. Buddlecombe, as Spigot closed the door and retired. 'I'll really trouble you for a little more *saumon à la Tar*— Dear, dear, I mean a little more expedition, sir. Surely you are not so morally blind as to wilfully keep a gentleman from his dinner.'

'Certainly not, sir,' replied Warriner, again courteously inclining his head, and speaking in more measured tones than ever. 'But still you will forgive me, I am sure, if I hint that, weighed with the importance of my business, a dinner should be as mere dust in the balance.'

'Nothing of the sort, sir,' snapped Mr. Buddlecombe, wheeling fiercely round on his visitor. 'I don't agree with you, sir,' and turning on his heel, he muttered with indignation, 'He's never seen me eat a dinner, or he wouldn't go calling it mere dust in

the balance, the long-winded young puppy.'

'Well, sir, we will at once proceed to business, then. Will you allow me to consult my note-book for a few moments?'

In reply to this unreasonable and unseasonable request, Mr. Buddlecombe could only wave his hand and give vent to a nondescript noise which may or may not have been the permission solicited. Anyhow, Warriner interpreted it in the former sense; and while he was apparently absorbed in his notes, Mr. Buddlecombe paced up and down the room, venting his sorrow, his indignation, and his impatience in the following disjointed mutterings:

'Soo-prame de volatile aux troo-fuls ruined! Filets de pigeon done to rags! Chapong rôtes au Périgord must be rapidly becoming chapong rôtes au kitchen cinder. I shall have a sort of rag and cinder banquet.'

Here Spigot appeared, and piled up the agony still higher with:

'The French cook, your worship, says the sight of his dinner spoiling before his very eye is getting too much for his feelings.'

'O, flesh and blood can stand this no longer!' said the mayor, in a desperate aside; and then added aloud, 'There, sir, you hear that. You've been quite long enough consulting your note-book. I can't waste another moment over preliminaries. State your case at once.'

'What a lot of playing the old gentleman takes! A salmon is a joke to him,' thought Warriner. 'Ten thousand pardons,' he pleaded, with another of his extremely polite bows. 'Believe me, I feel the delicacy of my position most acutely, and I must really beg to be allowed once more to tender my sincerest apol—'

'Bless my soul!' exclaimed Mr.

Buddlecombe wildly, 'politeness is all very well—I myself always carry it to an absurd extreme; but we have had enough of it on this occasion, sir. I'm sick of it. For goodness' sake let's have a little plain speaking now.'

'Certainly, sir, I quite admit the justice of your remarks; and you, on your side, will, I am sure, enter into my feelings of embarrassment—'

'No, sir, I can't do anything of the sort.'

'Pray, sir, do not hurry me; it is a subject involving so much—'

'Waste of time, sir!' roared Mr. Buddlecombe, now losing all control over himself. 'O, I see through all this delay and shilly-shallying. It is merely the vain expedient to gain time on the part of a—a—of an impostor, sir, an impostor!'

Here Mr. Buddlecombe, red in the face with passion, snapped his fingers at Warriner and pointed indignantly to the door.

'There, sir, there's your way. Be off with you!'

The imperturbable Warriner rose slowly from his seat, bowed low, and moved towards the door. On reaching it, he turned round and quietly said,

'It is in sorrow, sir, rather than in anger or indignation, that I repudiate the charge of imposition. If you cannot enter into my feelings, I can into yours, knowing as I do how strong appearances must be against me. But I can only reiterate, on my word of honour—' this solemnly placing his hand on his heart—'that the matter I had to lay before you would have involved a saving to you of the large sum I mentioned in my letter.'

'The dinner will be utterly spoiled, your worship,' said Spigot, putting his head in at the door.

Mr. Buddlecombe manifested

great emotion ; and Warriner continued, in that style of periphrastic politeness which he had adopted all through the interview, for the purpose of spinning out the time :

'I feel that I have already transgressed the limits of politeness beyond all rules of etiquette. Good-evening, sir.'

Poor Mr. Buddlecombe, torn by conflicting emotions, was a pitiable spectacle.

'Good-eve—stay, sir, don't—dear me—utterly spoiled ! Thirty thousand *filets de pigeons* sterling. I can't see any other way out of the difficulty. O dear, O dear ! Hang it, sir ! give me the pleasure' (gulp) 'of your company at dinner, and you can impart this piece of information in your own way afterwards.'

'Delighted,' said Warriner pleasantly. 'Since you're so pressing, I shall have much pleasure.'

'Humph,' grunted Mr. Buddlecombe aside, "'since you're so pressing," as the paving-stone remarked to the steam-roller. Spigot !'

'Your worship,' said Spigot, promptly reappearing from outside.

'Relieve this gentleman of his hat and coat ; and, Spigot, lay another place at the table ; he will dine here.'

As Mr. Buddlecombe made this

last communication, the situations between master and man were, for the first time in their respective lives, reversed. Spigot fairly stared his master out of countenance, and Mr. Buddlecombe dared not meet the searching gaze of his servant.

'I beg your most worshipful worship's pardon,' at last stammered Spigot ; 'but I don't think I quite heard what your worship was pleased to say.'

'He will dine here ; take his hat and coat,' sharply repeated Mr. Buddlecombe.

Like one in a dream, Spigot obeyed the behest ; and then, with a sort of savage politeness, Mr. Buddlecombe bowed his guest out of the room and followed.

As soon as the coast was clear, Florence emerged from behind the screen.

'O Algy, Algy !' she exclaimed, clapping her hands and laughing merrily, 'you clever darling ! I love you more than ever now, for your tact and coolness. But what *can* the scheme be ? Algy has given his word of honour, so of course there *must* be something. O poor darling old papa ! Now I must run up, and then go into the drawing-room as if I had just come down from my room.'

(To be continued.)

AN APRIL DREAM.

THE sun was sinking low in the west—
Low in the west at the close of day ;
And the opal clouds, in splendour drest,
Shone crimson and amber and silver-gray ;
And the twilight lay, like a veil of white,
On the face of day, at the door of night.

The spirit of Spring touched all the trees,
And the leaves broke out as they felt her pass ;
Her voice was heard in the balmy breeze,
And her ankles twinkled in the grass ;
The buttercups sought to kiss her feet,
As she trod the daisy-lighted street.

The fragrant breath of the violets blew
On my face like a pleasant dream of rest.
O, the world was fair, and the world was true !—
And the sun was sinking low in the west ;
And the twilight hung like a pall of white
On the wraith of day, at the grave of night.

And over the violet-scented sod,
Through purple beds, in the purple shade,
The maiden I love beside me trod,
And fair was the face of my lily-maid ;
And the tender light of her violet eyes
Dispelled the shadows that filled the skies.

We spoke no word, for the solemn hush
Of the evening lay on my soul and hers ;
But we heard the song of a missel-thrush
That sang with his mate in a belt of fir ;
And I knew that my heart, though unawares,
Was singing a sweeter song than theirs.

But the shadows grew, and the night came on,
And with it the hour of parting came ;
The daylight died when my love had gone,
But the lovelight burnt with brighter flame ;
The shadow of grief was in my breast,—
And the sun was sinking low in the west.

O sweet fair face that I love so well,
O beautiful face that no more I see,
Must I lose the love that I could not tell,
And mourn for the hopes that die with thee ?
Hast thou gone from my life like leaves that fall ?
Wert thou only a dream, then, after all ?

J. T. B. W.



AN APRIL DREAM.

See the Poem.



THE VIOLIN-PLAYER.

BY BERTHA THOMAS, AUTHOR OF 'PROUD MAISIE.'

CHAPTER XI.

A VENETIAN INTERLUDE.

NIGHT at Venice. Summer night—the air transparent as ether, and sweet with the perfume of gardenias and jasmine, little bouquets of which, in basketfuls, are being hawked about by ragged, dark-eyed urchins among the crowd of idlers sipping coffee and ices in the gardens of the Royal Palace, and listening to the strains of *Semiramide* and *Aida* played by the band under the trees.

Nine o'clock, and the music ceases; the throng disperse. Venice, never more than half-asleep, is sinking into the nearest approach to rest she knows. The fisher-boats have come into port on the Riva dei Schiavoni, and crowd there in dark masses, their red sails—that seem to have caught the tint of the campanili—furled, whilst along the landing long black rows of gondolas lie waiting for hire, the gondoliers dozing on the marble stairs.

Two young people stood looking down on this scene from the balconies of the Hôtel Danieli. The open windows behind showed a vista of the long lofty *salon* of the grandest but dull-looking suite in that grand but dull *ex-palazzo* of the Mocenigo.

It was very dull just then. July is a month when the English (wherein they err) do not frequent Venice, and the best rooms at the Hôtel Danieli, and the undivided obsequiousness of the landlord and his staff, are at the

disposal of the English *milor* and his lady, who have made it their halting-place on their way to the Tyrol. The *milor* is not a *milor*; it is a figure of speech which he cannot get these Italians to drop. There is that about him which secures an overplus of attention from discerning subordinates. Hundreds of rich consequential Britons came and went, without meeting with a tithe of the respectful oblations everywhere showered on this mild, unpretentious, middle-aged, bald-headed gentleman and his young wife.

Lady Brereton's face, as she stood on the balcony, was scarcely visible in the dusk; but the clinging folds of her ivory-coloured Indian-silk dress set off a figure that went as near the perfection of grace as imperfect human nature can go. The sleeping Ariadne in the Vatican has not more exquisite curves, a more consummately beautiful outline. Her companion was not Sir Adolphus, but a young man with penetrating gray eyes, and brown hair like her own; the two heads nearly match as he bends forward to speak. She smiles back with animation; and an impulsive Frenchman, passing underneath, looks up admiringly, and remarks to his fellow, '*C'est Romeo et Juliette!*'

Romeo was telling Juliet an anecdote. Whether he had it on good authority, as he averred, or whether he had invented it, or improved it, or picked it up in the gossip columns of a newspaper, was immaterial.

'It seems,' he was saying, 'that just now all artistic society in Rome is talking about some new statue by some new man—a figure of Paris on Mount Ida. The other day an American millionaire—the present owner of that famous statue "Jerusalem"—walks in upon the artist, whose name, I think, is Romer.'

Lady Brereton looked up with a sudden curious gleam of interest.

'The millionaire announces himself: he is ready to purchase the artist's work on the artist's own terms. The young man is delighted; the matter arranged; and the customer is leaving the studio, when he turns and explains himself thus: "These ten years, sir, I've been ransacking Europe for a companion-city to my 'Jerusalem,' and your fine personification of the French capital is the first I've turned up!"'

Lady Brereton seemed highly diverted.

'How amusing you are!' she said. 'You have made me laugh for the first time since we came to Venice.'

'It is a dull place,' said Gervase feelingly.

'It will always remind me,' she resumed, 'of our wedding journey, seven years ago now. It was the first place in Italy that Adolphus took me to.'

Gervase was silent, presumably sympathetic past the power of speech. Then he remarked suddenly,

'I should never bring my bride to Venice.'

'Why not?'

'There is too much here to admire. I should be jealous.'

'Jealous of St. Mark, and Titian?'

'Yes, and of the Rialto, and the Bridge of Sighs, and the Grand Canal—of anything that drew away her attention from myself.

But perhaps other men may not be so exacting, and some may have nothing to fear from any rival, even Venice.'

'O, but I really enjoyed it then,' she said presently, 'and was never tired of going about to the sights and so on. But now I know them all so well, I confess Venice to me is like a sea-prison or a grave; and I am glad we are leaving the day after to-morrow.'

'It is my first visit,' said Gervase apologetically. The chimes of St. Mark sounded as he spoke, and he made a polite movement of surprise, as though to suggest that, under the charm of present society, he had forgotten all about time and the hour. 'Nine o'clock. Your husband has evidently been detained; I must take my chance of getting a word with him at the ball to-night.'

'Must you go already?' said Diana, with a little prospective yawn. 'He is sure, you know, O, quite sure, to come in soon.'

Gervase half smiled, but shook his head, and excused himself.

'You are going to the opera, I daresay,' she said. 'Is it a Visconti night? I heard her last year at Milan; but they say her voice is very much gone off. Is it true?'

'I see no difference,' said Gervase unconcernedly.

'Ah, but you are one of her special admirers, are you not?' she said, unconcernedly also.

'There's no opera at all this evening, I believe,' he replied. 'By the way, do you go to the concert at the Fenice to-morrow?'

'Yes, yes; and remember we count upon you. Nothing in the world bores Adolphus so much as music. He victimises himself for my sake; but it always sends him to sleep—which is hard upon me, you know.'

No sooner had the door closed on the *attaché* than the light

and smile vanished from Diana's countenance, thrown off like a tiresome piece of armour. Crossing the room, she met her own likeness in an antique gilt mirror, and stopped to glance at it as sharply as if it were a rival's.

'Still so young-looking!' she thought, with surprise. At that moment she could have sworn that she felt a hundred. So much was certain, that in her image she found no cause for discontent. She turned away restlessly. Diana had not faith enough in happiness to wish anything keenly. All that the world had to offer in that way was empty as wind. Only she was speculating if the south wind might have been rather better than the north.

'Poor Gervase!'

Even to herself she kept up the farce of pitying him, as it were in revenge. Her thoughts now flew back a hundred years—seven in the calendar. Gervase had made love to her, wanted to marry her presumably, and she—flint-hearted though she prided herself on being at seventeen—had come perilously near requiting an imaginary predilection. Accident had undeceived her. Sir Adolphus had carried off the proud piqued maiden, and her heart, from want of practice, had grown very nearly as stony as she would have had it. Gervase had never touched it since then, or come near it; and if just now she questions whether after all she took a false step in her choice, it is not from motives of sentiment. Gervase was clever, ambitious, bold, was likely to rise; whilst—

The comparison was cut short, or rather completed, by the entrance of Sir Adolphus, who with all his virtues had just this much against him, that he was setting, indisputably setting.

He was a little surprised to find

his wife in a brown study, and not yet dressed for the *bal de cérémonie* to which he was to take her.

'There will always be time enough,' she said mechanically, as she left the room to put on her ball-dress and jewels.

Sir Adolphus was concerned at the faint depression he detected in her manner, but consoled himself by the reflection that social distraction never failed to restore her to spirits. So he settled down in an armchair with a political pamphlet, which in an unguarded moment he had promised the author to read, and fell asleep over the second page.

Gervase left the hotel with a more animated step than that with which he had entered it. At his approach the gondoliers roused themselves, and doffed their caps. He stepped into a boat he had left waiting there, involuntarily glancing upwards to see if Diana were regarding him from the balcony. No such thing; she was regarding herself in the glass.

At half a word and half a gesture from him, the rowers started off. How soothing, how grateful, both to the flesh and the spirit is the Venetian mode of locomotion! No straining horses, no stupid drivers and jolting, and no noise, except an occasional outbreak of swearing at the bridges, when Greek meets Greek; but the war is of words only—no fear of the faintest literal concussion, for gondoliers have made rowing one of the fine arts. You are wafted on, as smoothly as if at a wish, to your destination, and however you may be in a hurry to get there, you are sorry to arrive.

Gervase was never in a hurry, or he would have been now. Presently he took out a small note, and tried to re-read a rather illegible scrawl by starlight.

'Casa Malatesta, 1^o piano.

'We are going a party to the Lido to-night. Will you make one? We go masked, but you come as you like. Join us here any time before ten.'

The gondola had left the Grand Canal, and was darting through the labyrinthine network of smaller streams. Suddenly it halted on the quay of a narrow water-lane, in the unfrequented Giudecca quarter, where, though but a stone's throw from the busy brilliant Grand Canal, all is lonely, dark, and silent. The head-gondolier pointed to a large, walled-up-looking house, saying, 'Casa Malatesta.'

Gervase sprang out, pushed open the heavy wooden door, and disappeared. The door swung to, and the gondoliers dozed off again.

The hall within was unlit, except by a gleam from a broken gas-lamp in a grass-grown courtyard beyond. Gervase mounted the stone staircase to the first floor, and rang.

The head of Virginie, Linda's watchful attendant, will appear at the grating above, and shout with Italian precaution, 'Who is it?'

Gervase is prepared with a *bon mot* to fling back in reply.

There was a moment's delay, and the door swung open. Gervase marched in, and it slammed behind him.

He was in the vestibule of Mdlle. Visconti's apartments, but no Virginie was visible. The place was faintly lit by Roman lamps, and the pleasant odour of some rare Oriental perfume filled the atmosphere. Evidently a surprise awaited the intruder. Linda was always surprising her friends.

The door of her little *salon* was ajar. He pushed it open gently, and entered.

At the first glance Gervase

asked himself if he had not lost his way, and walked into one of the private apartments of the Moor's Alhambra. The furniture was overlaid with Turkish stuffs; richly-coloured and delicately-worked drapery disguised the hardness and sharp outlines of Italian chairs and sofas. On the couch, among red, yellow, and green silk-embroidered cushions, Mdlle. Visconti was reclining, with a palm-fern and a vase full of roses becomingly placed at the head of her divan. She wore a loose Turkish dress of blue silk and white gauze, and pretended to be sunk in a siesta.

'Bravo, bravo!' said Gervase, tapping his hands together gently.

She did not stir. He went up softly behind her, and, bending down over the green cushion on which her head was resting, looked into her face. It seemed to Linda that one of the rose-leaves had fluttered down and touched her cheek.

Her mouth broke into a roguish smile; the blue eyes opened and met his; and the spell was broken. She sprang up, and laughed heartily; Gervase also.

'What's the meaning of this?' he said. 'I see the Grand Turk has been here—taken Mdlle. Visconti for a Circassian—she's like one, I vow—and offered to promote her to be chief houri of his earthly paradise.'

'His what?'

'His harem, in the vernacular.'

Linda put her hand up to his mouth in playful reproach.

'Ask Cuscut our manager, and Tebaldo our madcap tenor,' she said ruefully. 'They are always up to some nonsense or other. The latest is that they have taken it into their heads we shall all go to the Lido to-night in Eastern disguise; the men as pashas, with their faces darkened; the ladies

veiled of course. We are to pass for a legation from the Emperor of Morocco, and shall mystify the Cook's tourists and New Yorkers nicely. Won't you come? We have room for one European *attaché*.'

Gervase laughed, and declined. He was engaged, he said; but to make himself amends had come to present his excuses in person.

Linda seemed content with the compromise. She stood up, and turned a rather unsuccessful pirouette or two, saying,

'What do you think of me for a Nautch-girl? Virginie and I have been ransacking Venice all day for Eastern stuffs. We are coming back here to supper, and I wanted the room to look in character. Look at this absurd little inlaid mother-o'-pearl table. Here's coffee all ready for you, Monsieur le Sultan.'

'I can't see,' said Gervase plaintively. 'Do, for heaven's sake, tell Virginie to bring in an ordinary civilised moderator-lamp or something, that I may look at the Sultana.'

The Nautch-girl took a taper, went round and lit the candles herself. Linda was at this time in the absolute prime of her beauty. There is a supreme moment that comes to a peach, a pear, an anemone flower, a fair woman—a point passed, alas, almost as soon as reached.

It was easy to see that nothing as yet had succeeded in materially interfering with her enjoyment of enjoyable things. She had always contrived to throw off or make light of trouble in all its forms; and the fret and corrosion of theatrical life, if it had told secretly, had not as yet told outwardly upon her. Perhaps she was really the loveliest woman in Venice at that moment, as she was undoubtedly the most courted and talked about.

'Well, what news?' began Gervase, shaking his head over Linda's coffee. 'Virginie is not equal to Florian,' he parenthesised silently.

'*Faust* last night, and a triumph for me,' said Linda, with gay self-approbation. 'Why were you not there to see it?'

'Because, for my sins, I suppose, I was dining with the representative of my nation.'

'What, those English, those Breretons?'

'How many times, I wonder, shall I have to explain to you that Sir Adolphus Brereton is no more an ambassador than—'

'Than I am a sister of mercy,' suggested Linda.

'Exactly; a simple *rentier*,' concluded Gervase, deeming it vain to perplex Linda's understanding with the ups and downs of that gentleman's past career in the diplomatic service, from which ill-health had caused him to retire two years ago.

'What is his wife's name?' asked Linda abruptly. Then, as Gervase was looking displeased, she added playfully, 'Only answer me that, *caro mio*, and I'll never allude to her again.'

'Diana.'

'That means the moon, I know. A good name for your cousin. She's cold as steel. I saw her at St. Mark's on the procession day, with that stick of a man she has married. He looks like an umbrella-stand with a coat and hat hung upon it.'

'Let them alone, for heaven's sake!' said Gervase, impatiently and in despair.

'I will, I will,' said Linda, aware that the style of her conversation irritated him; but prudence was the instinct most easily overcome in her. 'It is nonsense, is it not, for me to be jealous of fashionable English people like your friends?'

'Ridiculous nonsense,' said Gervase frankly.

'And yet I could be,' said Linda musingly. 'I am jealous of anybody who tries to attract what I care for away from me. I hate them—should like to kill them!'

'Child! little fool!' said Gervase laughingly.

'O, I should;' and she came and sat on a low seat beside him. 'Tell me now, did you think of Linda singing at the opera, when you were over your ambassador's wine?'

'I did.'

'And wished yourself in the stalls?'

'Of course. Still you know very well, Linda, that you cannot play Marguerite.'

'Now why?' she said; adding insinuatingly, 'You must know I never allowed any one to find fault with me before.'

'Because Linda is a coquette to the tips of her fingers. Such a Marguerite would have begun to flirt with Mephistopheles directly Faust's back was turned.'

She laughed outright, accepting the comment as a compliment.

'Bah, I play it as I can. Anyhow it is better than Mdlle. Zagarola's; a prim hypocritical little minx, with a pursed-up mouth turned down at the corners, and flourishing a big prayer-book; for all the world like the Fille de Madame Angot in the first act.'

Gervase laughed heartily.

'Say that mine is better, or say that you like it better—that is all I want.'

Gervase said it obediently.

He was going to say something else; Linda checked him, asking abruptly, with sudden coolness,

'Well, *caro mio*, and when are you leaving Venice?'

'My friends start the day after to-morrow for the Tyrol; they wish me to join them by and by.'

'And you wish to go. For your cousin's sake or your own?'

Gervase continued, without heeding the interruption:

'In October, as you know, I am due at Rome, to replace a comrade at the Embassy.'

'October,' she repeated musingly. 'By then I shall be in Cairo, or New York, or—married—who knows?'

'What do you mean, please?' he demanded.

'Just what I say. You know old Count Janowski here, he is madder after me than ever. He would marry me to-morrow if I would listen.'

Gervase laughed.

'Linda—Mdlle. Visconti, what a conquest to boast of! Think of the splendid establishment he offers you. A husband of sixty, ruined by roulette, a martyr to rheumatism—'

'Ah, but to be a countess! she interposed.

'To be a *diva* is better, believe me,' said Gervase frankly. 'What do you know about countesses? Besides, you would only be a countess of smoke.'

'So I thought; so I think; only there come times—'

'Now, for instance?' said Gervase inquiringly.

'Not now.' She gave it up, bent down her head over his hand, which she held, and suddenly began kissing it in a passionate little way. 'That is if I could think that you—'

'That I?'

'Speak the truth when you say that you love me.'

'*Petite*,' he said gravely, 'what must I do to convince you?'

She was silent; then lifted her head with the look of *diablerie* of a spoilt child.

'Say you won't go to the Tyrol.'

What his answer would have been is not known. A ring at

the door awoke Linda to the fact that she was expecting a party of friends; and Gervase recollected that he was going to a ball.

'Shall you be at the Fenice to-morrow?' she asked, detaining him a moment. 'You remember the child who used to live with me at Bleiburg. She's to play, you know. She's Aracieli's pupil. Have you forgotten her?'

Gervase reflected.

'No; but I've forgotten her name.'

'Laurence Therval. She's grown up now, and a splendid player everybody says.'

'Indeed!' said Gervase, making a note of the news, as a bit of musical gossip, wherewithal to regale Lady Brereton—an accomplished amateur—at the ball.

Linda's friends now broke in upon them, ready and primed for the frolic; and Gervase departed, leaving behind him a merry party, inclined to be wild. Yet it is a question whether there was most reckless disorder in their buffoonery, or in his head, as he joined the decorous assembly, talked business with Sir Adolphus, and waltzed punctually with his wife.

Of all the pretty adventures that had befallen our hero between twenty and thirty—and if, by thirty, he had come to regard this world as a pleasure-ground designed by the Almighty for the special satisfaction of Gervase Damian, he had some excuse in his uniformly flattering experience—not the least interesting was his unexpected meeting at Milan, a month ago, with Linda Visconti.

How had things changed since they parted! Gervase—so the outside world told him—was on the high-road to eminence in the diplomatic service. Linda—no doubt of that—was well launched, both on the operatic stage and the stage of life. But except

that her beauty was more brilliant and complete than formerly, she seemed unaltered; attractive as ever, unaccountable as ever, and if as indiscreet, she was clever enough to command the appearances of respect, even where she could command no more.

Both of them had a character for volatility among their friends of the oppositesex, and knew it. Who would have predicted that, after an interval of years, they should have been able to take up their acquaintance where it had been dropped? Not they themselves. There was something piquant in this presence of the strange element of constancy in a *rapport* so ephemeral as theirs—something that added not a little to the charm.

CHAPTER XII.

GALA NIGHT.

THE opening of the Fenice Theatre, even for a night, and whatever the occasion, is always a gala event in Venice. Had Aracieli's concert come off under any other roof, Venetia's Upper Ten might simply have ignored it. The artist was an old stager, and well aware that if he wished to move that little world he must first get the right place to stand upon. Interest with the powers that be had thrown open those magic doors to him and his company.

It was a *festa* too; the anniversary of a battle, or a peace, or the translation of a saint's bones—what matter? something that made a pretext for illuminations and fireworks. The interior of the Fenice presented a gay picture. Italian ladies in full dress thronged the boxes, affording foreign tourists a rare glimpse of the famed native beauty they have mostly to take upon trust. Rather too much

powder and rouge, perplexing to a neophyte unpractised in distinguishing the duchess from the *ballerina* she tries to counterfeit; but beautiful eyes, beautiful shoulders, beautiful jewels were there in profusion; and the raw material for beautiful dresses, sadly marred, however, in the making-up; for French fashions, like the French language, come to dire grief under Italian treatment.

Linda was conspicuous in a small stage-box, though half ensconced behind the curtain, a manoeuvre that led to much painful twisting of necks and straining of eyes on the part of young gentlemen in the pit, tantalised by a glimpse of the twinkle of a diamond earring and the back of a golden head.

But the centre of attraction was in the best box on the best tier, which Sir Adolphus Brereton had taken for his party. Diana had the gift of appropriating everybody's notice without a touch in look, dress, or manner seeming to solicit it. Her husband, a patient fixture in the background, was generally overlooked; but Gervase, in attendance on his cousin, was the object of envying glances from his own sex, and admiring ones from hers, in about equal proportion.

Well might the compliment of so brilliant a house put the artists on their mettle; and now for a feast of sound, beginning with Rossini and ending with Weber.

Titian is dead and Tintoret is dead; and men have it that their art is on the wane. But the spirit that inspired these men is indestructible. Spent or stopped in one line of expression, it breaks out in another. We are in the nineteenth century, and Music is having her day.

Titian and Tintoret never heard *Don Giovanni* or *Fidelio*, a Beet-

hoven symphony or a Schumann song. Music, in the Golden Age of her elder sister, was in leading-strings, stiff, formal, and monotonous as the Madonnas of the early Byzantine painters. Many a modern pianoforte exercise strikes as a work of genius compared with the best operas and cantatas that Raphael or Michael Angelo ever knew.

Araciel had taken care to make his musical *menu* as 'light' as possible. Italy, the cradle of music, remains in some sense its cradle only. Other nations have adopted her child; it has grown into a giant, and she shrinks appalled from its exploits. The Señor was an established favourite with the Venetians, and his famous execution of stupendously difficult variations on a popular theme tickled their ears, gratified their love of the marvellous, and won him his accustomed applause. But the novelty, and therefore the main interest, of the concert to most present was the wonderful violin-player, Laurence Therval, personally unknown in Italy, though not to fame there. Her name in crossing the Alps had contracted the usual halo of fable that follows notoriety about like a shadow.

'Quite young,—sixteen or seventeen at most,' said a gentleman who took in one local 'Leaf.'

'Nonsense! Six or seven and twenty if she's a day,' returned his companion, who took in its rival; adding mysteriously, 'You know she's *really* a daughter of Araciel's, mother a lady of high rank—secret marriage—an old story now,' with a nod and a look that meant a whole sensation novel.

'Moonshine!' said a third, who read *Galignani*. 'Her father was English, a soap-merchant who went bankrupt and shot himself, and her real name is Romer.'

'Chut! she comes.'

The gentlemen hushed their gossip, the ladies stopped criticising each other's toilettes, and opera-glasses were levelled with the unanimity of a regiment presenting arms.

The next minute the comments in the stalls began again.

'They said she was pretty. O no, she's too thin; and she's got no colour at all. She should rouge, then;' and so on, with that amazing, semi-brutal Italian candour that passes judgment in an Arcadian manner on all orders and degrees of women.

'Beautiful eyes, though,' said one who had long sight.

'Yes; but hazel, or some mixed colour, or they would not sparkle so from so far off.'

'She is like one of the immortal Vinci's pictures!' exclaimed an enthusiastic art-student in the gallery, and he felt his heart gone on the spot. He could have set the bells ringing; he had found a heroine for his next picture.

Thin, but not fragile or shadowy, her figure was firmly built and well outlined. The beauty of the face was chiefly one of spirit, expression, and intelligence. It charmed like beauty, and set you searching to account for your admiration. Dark hair, pushed back from a white forehead; a pale face, —paler under the glare of the foot-lights and the stress of excitement, —a face that, with its firm-set lips and intense fixity of expression, might have been cut out of alabaster. Her dress, which the English party approved — 'In excellent taste, so rare in that sort of people,' said Lady Brereton (whilst the enraptured art-student in the gallery at once set her down, with her black tulle and silk, and silver ornaments, for a princess of night) — displeased the Italians highly. Black, to this sunny folk, is an ugly, de-

pressing colour, a colour for nuns and funerals. To crown all, the young performer's simplicity of manner went against her. They were not at all fastidious, those gentlemen in the stalls — had a frank liking for nods and becks and wreathed smiles, and would always rather pay to see a Bacchante than a St. Cecilia.

Their cold glances, dead silence, and evident disapproval had offered a challenge. Such a public gives no quarter, knows no mercy; and her friends behind the scenes felt it, and looked at each other with anxiety as Laurence undaunted picked up the glove.

The Hungarian airs which Araciél had chosen for her to play were too fantastic to appeal to that crowd. Venice is passionate, not romantic; realistic, not imaginative. That Laurence should make that music please those men was, in a technical sense, impossible. But frown and shrug though they might, they soon found they must look and listen too.

As one after another of those wild stirring airs followed, the veriest Gallios present that night found the music they depreciated affect them strangely, keenly, delightfully; it set the lover thinking of his love, woke fancies in the artist, soothed the discontented, elated the light-hearted. Some essence went abroad as she played that heightened the joyousness of life and idealised its sadness. Such is the mysterious alchemy of music, which, falling on barren and desolated hearts, can make fresh thoughts, fresh feelings grow.

To come down from the clouds, those would-be detractors were men, with heads, hearts, pulses, feelings, intelligence; and genius has a pass-key to all natures.

Once conquered, an Italian au-

dience is generosity itself. Vociferous calls and recalls and deafening acclamations followed now.

Lady Brereton tapped her fan lightly on the ledge of her box, saying,

'A very clever performance.'

Her tone grated on Gervase. It is true a minute before he had been speaking of Araciél's playing as he might of the tricks of a clever poodle. For though theoretically he did not dislike or even despise fiddlers, and piqued himself on being so much more liberal-minded than Lord Chesterfield, he felt a gap between himself and such, that made on the whole even his tailor seem more like a man and a brother. Only here the violinist was a woman, and it had never occurred to him to lose sight of the link of humanity between them.

From that moment nothing but Laurence was spoken or thought of in the theatre. Twice more she played—a duet with Araciél, and a solo. The rest of the programme was comparatively unheeded. Venice was won.

Among the beholders not the least interested was Mdlle. Linda Visconti. Although about as tenacious of most impressions as a sieve, her little comrade's affection had been so unlike anything else that had come into her life, that those old memories had still a lingering hold on her feelings, and she was surprised by a moment of unaffected, unselfish gratification in Laurence's triumph over the Venetians. The child had wonderfully improved; her playing, Linda affirmed, was magnificent. But what delighted her chiefly was the contrast between the little boyish figure, with short elf-locks, that she recollected, and this tall maiden, with long trailing robe and thick coils of hair. The transformation, said Miss Linda

to her professional friends in her box, as she told them the story, was really too killing.

It was Laurence's turn to be amazed when, after the concert, a beauty in ruby-coloured velvet came rushing to meet her behind the scenes, took hold of both her hands, and embraced her effusively, saying, loud enough for every one to hear,

'You were superb; I am delighted to be here to tell you so!' and she must recognise her fellow-student of seven years ago.

'I heard you were in Venice,' Laurence replied hurriedly, overjoyed at the meeting. 'It seemed too good to be true. May I come and see you? We leave to-morrow night.'

'Yes—no,' Linda said vaguely.

'Where are you staying?'

'Hôtel Vittoria.'

'Then I will come to you to-morrow morning at twelve o'clock. I am not settled myself. It will be better I come to you. And now we are all going on the water to see the illuminations. *Au revoir*. Mind, to-morrow at twelve.'

And she vanished with a suite of theatrical satellites—like a brilliant comet with its tail.

Araciél, on his side, was being beset by a swarm of professional friends pressing him and his wife and their ward to join this, that, or the other party for the last hours of that gala night. He put them all off, saying,

'No, no; we go first home. I have two children to fetch; we are a gondola full ourselves. Come, my soul' (to his wife). 'Renza, where are you? You will always be getting lost.'

It was Araciél who was always straying away from his flock, conscientiously believing the sheep to be at fault. Before he could be stopped he was running all round the porticoes of the theatre

in search of his gondola. Meanwhile, Laurence had quickly singled it out from the rest, but the recapture of Araciél was a matter of time. A friend was sent in pursuit, and brought him back at last.

Ah, there was the gondola! he said complacently. He knew he should find it; but ladies are always so impatient.

The trio shot off in the starlight. Araciél gave a long sigh of relief; his task was done; he was now going to enjoy himself. He feasted his eyes on the bridges, palaces, and towers, and presently sang out aloud, at the top of a voice as hoarse as a raven's:

“Sur sa mer nonchalante,
Vénise l'indolente
Ne compte ni ses jours—”

‘Mercy, Araciél!’ begged his wife, with her hands to her ears.

‘May I not sing, my soul? You forbid it in the house, and I obey; but I thought out of doors—This place makes me fizz with admiration; then what can I do but sing? One cannot dance in a gondola:

“Ne compte ni ses jours,
Ni ses amours.”

Eh, Renza,’ suddenly interrupting himself, ‘how, pray, did you ever get acquainted with *la Visconti*?’

‘We were students together at Bleiburg.’

‘To be sure. Who could believe it! Madonna mia! she has got on in this world since then!’

‘Her dress was magnificent,’ sighed his wife. ‘She wore her hair *à la Dubarry*, Renza; did you observe?’

‘And the jewels, did you observe?’ put in Araciél. ‘Who provides them? The theatre director, I suppose.’

‘Hush, thou slanderer!’ rebuked his wife.

‘But I say nothing, heart of

mine! Here they call her the Queen of the Adriatic. She has made a *furor*; but her voice is already spoilt, and her singing shocking. She has been pushed by intrigue and private interest.’

‘I don’t believe it,’ said Laurence impulsively.

‘Ah, the Hôtel Vittoria at last!’ said Araciél, who was fidgeting to get to the *festa*. ‘Poor little Cherubina and Domenico!—eating their heads off with impatience, I daresay.’

‘Ah, *mon ami*, you will always give to the beggars,’ said his wife reproachfully, as she saw a shower of coppers fall at the dirty feet of the piece of decrepitude who hooked in their gondola to the landing.

‘Never again, my own one,’ he said penitently. ‘They weighed so heavy in my pocket. But see, I have none left; this shall be the last offence, I promise you.’

On the threshold of their apartments stood a pair of children on the tiptoe of expectation, their eyes dancing in their heads.

‘You are sleepy, you monkeys,’ said Araciél. ‘You may go to bed, then.’

A shout of derision answered him; the young people were not to be taken in. Nothing but concessions were genuine coming from papa.

‘Off we go, then!’

The party hastened to reënter the gondola, and a second metal shower fell at the beggar’s feet.

‘Some that remained over in my pocket from last time,’ apologised Araciél to his better half.

A *festa* in Venice must ever be unique for *spectacle*. Some two thousand gondolas thronged the lagunes that night. The Grand Canal was brilliantly illuminated; and in its fringe of palaces every balcony, window, and flight of stairs was rained with sightseers.

Songs and serenades came echoing from two large barges, fancifully decorated with coloured glass lamps and flowers, each with its band of musicians on board, which moved up and down the lagoon, followed by a floating mass of gondolas. Rockets and fireworks were let off at intervals, some from boats, some from the shore, suddenly revealing the faces of the crowd, the white domes, and red campanili, which gleamed for a moment, then vanished in darkness.

Midnight was the signal for a general move in the direction of St. Mark's, where a final illumination was to form a climax and to close the festivities. The children, among whom we must include Aracieli, were, by this time, half wild with excitement and glee. Lights, glitter, and music were at all times enough to turn papa's head, never over firm on his shoulders; and as the party landed and followed in the stream of pedestrians hastening towards the Piazza, it was as much as could be done, by his wife on one side and Laurence on the other, to keep him from getting lost by running aside to look at a pretty bit of view, or to accost some stranger in whom he erroneously believed himself to have recognised a friend.

The Piazza was thronged. People of all ranks gathered fraternally together before the domes of St. Mark, in the most famous and most beautiful square in the world, to enjoy side by side the *bonne bouche* of the night's panorama.

Venice was so busy amusing itself, and the limelight played such strange tricks with the sky, that no one took heed of some black angry-looking thunder-clouds rising fast; and when presently a violent peal burst overhead, it came with the startling

effect of a cannon-shot. The first heavy drops of an impending rain-shower struck dismay into the ladies in silk attire, and two or three vivid flashes of lightning, and crashes of thunder that followed in an instant, completed the panic. A stampede ensued, every one rushed into the arcades; the crowd that a minute ago had filled the open square was trying to compress itself into the small covered space under the colonnades. These affording but few and narrow outlets into the city, there resulted a crush, in which those under shelter were in some danger of being flattened against the shuttered shop-fronts.

Aracieli's party had been sundered in a moment. His wife still clung to his arm, Domenico to hers; but a surging mass had interposed between them and Laurence, who, with Cherubina, was forced away by the living stream, pushing in cross-directions.

Laurence had need of all her courage and presence of mind to protect the terrified child, who was small for her age, and coming off but second best in the crowd. A deluge of rain swept over the Piazza, and occasioned a second more determined rush. Cherubina half-disappeared, and Laurence, in trying to extricate her, was getting badly crushed herself, when a bystander came to her aid, shouldered back the mob by main force, and lifted up the child, who, half-mad with fright, held on like a little cuttle-fish to this strong rock of defence that had suddenly presented itself.

The crowd still wedged them in closely on every side; Laurence was incoherently thanking Cherubina's preserver, unaware, in the darkness and confusion, whether she were addressing a prince or a pedlar, an Italian who would understand what she was say-

ing, or an American who would not.

Gervase was divided between impatience with the stupidity of the crowd, who *would* push instead of quietly filing off, and amusement at his position, a succourer of damsels in distress, as he stood, with a fair-haired girl clinging tightly to his shoulder, and making a barricade of his person to protect the dark-haired one by his side.

The current had carried them on to a point where a narrow alley issues from the Piazza. Gervase seized the moment, and contrived to pilot his *protégée* out of the colonnade. The side street was comparatively clear, and they breathed freely again. Gervase put down Cherubina, who was overcome with surprise to find she was not injured. The other girl, whose face he could not see, it was muffled up with black lace, was thanking him again in a sweet low voice.

'But for you the child might have been badly hurt. I am not strong enough to lift her.'

'I should think not,' said Gervase, smiling, trying to discern her features, for the first time with a thought of identification. 'Can I be of any further use to you? Your friends—'

'We have missed them in the crowd.'

'You will scarcely find them again. My gondola is here at the landing. Pray let me escort you home.'

The rain was falling heavily; there was no time to deliberate; the matter decided itself. In a minute they were seated inside.

The light fell on Laurence's face as she stepped into the boat, and Gervase had recognised her. But under the coffin-like shelter of the gondola it was too dark for herself to get more than a

shadowy glimpse of the unknown cavalier whose timely offer had been so readily accepted.

Perhaps it was the gentleness of his manner, the tact and consideration that pervaded his conversation and demeanour, and prevented embarrassment, or perhaps that the excitement of playing was still upon her, quickening her nerves, exhilarating her senses; but Laurence felt an indefinable sensation of ease, almost enjoyment, during that strange brief voyage; talked without effort and with animation. Her address had all the charm of a Frenchwoman's; but there was more softness and seriousness in her countenance than usually accompanies that acute and active type. Five minutes, and they were in sight of the Vittoria Hotel. Cherubina was bemoaning herself; she was wet and cold.

'O what a nasty, nasty end to so nice a *festa*!'

'I don't know,' said Laurence gaily. 'I think we had all enjoyed the *festa* through first—I did.'

'For my part,' said Gervase, 'I would not have had it end in any other way for the world.'

The good-humour of her companions somehow unaccountably increased Cherubina's fractiousness.

'I don't like Venice,' she asserted roundly; 'it's nasty. I'm so glad we don't stay.' Gervase's countenance fell. 'I hope Rome won't be anything like this. Don't you, Renza?'

Gervase's countenance rose.

'When do you go to Rome?' he asked.

'For the winter,' said Laurence vaguely.

They alighted.

'Monsieur,' said Laurence, with the natural animation that gives a charm to the simplest words and

actions, 'how can I thank you for your kindness to us—strangers?'

Gervase's reply, which was something about helping angels unawares, given low and half-laughing, was caught by Cherubina.

'Who is he?' she asked sharply.

Laurence laughed.

'Child, how should I know?'

Yet she was perplexed at something; the ghost of a reminiscence.

'He looked at you as if he knew you,' said Cherubina, puzzled; then she burst into a laugh. 'Why, of course, he had seen you at the concert. How stupid I am!'

It was another hour before the rest of their party arrived. Aracieli had insisted on pursuing half a dozen imaginary Laurences before his wife could persuade him that the girls had probably gone home. By this time not a gondola was to be procured; so they started to walk back to the Vittoria, and would have spent the whole night in walking away from it, had not Madame, chancing fortunately to look round, caught a glimpse of it in a street behind them.

Gervase had lost his party, too; but had found a little adventure that made amends. He dwelt on it all the way back to Danieli's. There was something new in his mood that made him think that the illuminations or the music or the electricity in the atmosphere had affected his brain.

On reaching his hotel he found a note awaiting him. It was Linda's scrawl. He was on earth again, and for the moment all else was forgotten.

She had been offered an engagement by an opera director at Vienna, one it was her plain interest, artistically speaking, to accept. Only it would oblige her to quit Venice at once. 'I shall be sorry to leave,' she wrote, 'and most of all because no one,

least of all yourself, regrets it. If you want to wish me good-bye, come to-morrow morning.'

So finishes the *festa*. The next day the Hôtel Danieli is in a great state of bustle. The Breretons leave for the Tyrol, and as much fuss is made about it as if it were a royal progression, greatly to the annoyance of Sir Adolphus.

The Aracieli left Venice in the evening. No fuss attended their going or staying. From noon onwards Laurence had been waiting in vain at the Vittoria. No Linda appeared, and the sun set without bringing any sign of the fair delinquent, who had, in fact, forgotten all about that tryst. The Aracieli laughed at Laurence's disappointment.

'My dear child,' said Madame severely, 'she did quite right not to come. Mdlla. Visconti is no friend for you. Do you understand?'

Laurence said nothing. Linda had been a friend to her long ago, she understood that best. That all worth having in their friendship had been on her side alone was an idea that had never occurred to her, and it pained her to hear these hard things said, hard truths though they might be.

CHAPTER XIII.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

It was about two months after that *festa* night that a stranger halted in Venice, making inquiries for Mdlla. Visconti, late of the Malibran Theatre.

The stranger had arrived after dark, and in a third-class carriage. He put up at an obscure and not particularly reputable inn, and his researches were made with circumspection, furtively.

They were made in vain. One told him one story; one another.

She was singing in Milan, stated the innkeeper. She had left for Vienna two months ago, thought the waiter. A gondolier affirmed positively that she had been seen yesterday on the Lido. She had been staying all the while in Venice *incognita*, the informant believed, and he gave the stranger an address on the Giudecca, which proved to be a wrong one. For good information, like other good things, must be paid for accordingly; and the inquirer's pockets seemed to be very thinly lined.

Two days he lingered in Venice, and on the third evening (he never went out till towards dusk, and carefully avoided the fashionable frequented streets and piazzas) he stood lounging over a dilapidated bridge in a remote deserted wing of the town, remarking within himself that he was approaching the end of his resources, and must go on his way without fulfilling the object of his visit.

Just then he saw a lady step out of a gondola that had drawn up before a house, not a stone's throw from where he stood. She was veiled, Venetian fashion; still he had a sense of recognition, and was hastening forwards to reconnoitre, when he started back, and instinctively effaced himself behind a pillar. She was not alone.

Before he could bethink himself, the lady had disappeared into the house, her companion into the gondola, which was soon out of sight. The watcher took the number of the house, and retraced his steps to his hostelry, whence, the same evening, he despatched a messenger to make certain inquiries. The result was that the next morning Linda received the following missive:

'My Sister,—I am in Venice for a few hours, on my way back to Rome, and would not leave without seeing you. It is impossible for me to come to your house. My movements are spied upon, my footsteps dogged, my acquaintances marked; it might involve you in trouble. Appoint some place of meeting out of doors, after dusk.'

The answer came duly, without delay:

'At Ave Maria—in the public gardens.'

That the public gardens of a city should be selected as the most fitting place for a private interview will surprise no one acquainted with Venice. There, on a promontory outstretching from the artisan's quarter of the town, lie these dreary pleasure-grounds, forsaken, except by children and invalids. Linda, who dared neither refuse to see her brother nor meet him in absolute solitude, knew what she was about when she appointed this meeting-place, as insuring him sufficient privacy and her protection.

Towards sundown she left her abode, dressed with the utmost simplicity, and wearing a thick veil. Her gondoliers set her down at some distance from the rendezvous. She dismissed them, and entered the gardens, where she walked up and down the wide dull terraces for what seemed to her a long while, waiting in a state of growing trepidation. From their childhood upwards Bruno had been a perpetual source of apprehension to her. As a boy by his outbreaks of temper, as a youth by his violent language and self-assumed imperious authority over her, from which Linda, however, in her own way, had very speedily thought fit to emancipate

herself. Since then his vagaries of a political nature, of which he talked and wrote pompously so as to encourage her in her wildest suppositions, filled her with dismay and vague dread. She tried to forget him, but withal that he sent her occasional reminders of his existence like the present; he was all the kith and kin she had in the world, and her thoughts of themselves would revert to him at times, especially times of adversity.

She had been straining her eyes in the distance in all directions, when suddenly she barely stifled a scream on perceiving him whom she had come to meet standing almost close to her under a tree. Just like Bruno to start up, as it were, out of the ground. His cloak flung over his shoulder half concealed his features; he had seen her, and advanced a step or two.

'Bruno?' she began hesitatingly. The folds of his wrapper fell back, disclosing a face of a naturally handsome, even delicate type, effectually disfigured by a sinister sullen expression, and a ragged growth of hair and beard, accompanied by an ostentatious slovenliness of appearance.

Linda extended her hand with the peculiar cordiality with which we caress a dog of whose teeth we are secretly afraid, but more afraid to show it.

'My sister!' He scrutinised her and her plain black toilet with a quick glance, and then said, in a less hard voice, 'I wanted to see you, if only for a moment, and even at a risk. As you know. I have broken with the world, the world you have to live in, and we cannot meet often; still, there are ties,—and you are all I have left now. Since I heard you were here I waited, trying to find you out.'

'We meet so seldom, indeed!'

sighed Linda sympathetically. 'Our paths are so different; it is a chance if they cross.'

He nodded, and observed uncomfortably,

'And who knows but this may be the last time!'

'What do you mean?' she asked, intimidated by something in his tone.

His countenance darkened.

'I have told you I am surrounded by hostile forces,' he said. 'I and all my associates. Our enemies' game is, by dint of petty persecution, to provoke us to some outbreak that will enable them to clap the prison-doors upon us. Well, they are the strongest. But one day we may be.'

Linda shuddered.

'What brings you to Venice?' she asked faintly.

'The wrong and oppression of powers whose slaves we are,' he said bitterly. 'The association I belong to sent me to Germany—to Kronstadt. I had a tobacconist's business there, and was doing well. The authorities ejected me, without compensation and without warning.'

'What for?'

'For speaking the truth,' he said self-complacently; 'for presuming to speak it plainly in the light of day. They have made it a crime now, and call it using seditious language.'

'What did you say?' she asked curiously.

'What I have said always, and shall say again in spite of them,' he returned, with the composure of the dreary, cold, unshrinking fanaticism which so appalled his life-loving easy-going sister. 'That what men call law and justice is only legalised wrong—property, but protected robbery; and monarchy, a disease, to be stamped out if necessary by the extirpation of those who propagate it—'

'How could you be so foolish, so imprudent!' she cried spontaneously.

He laughed derisively.

'Well, my little sister, there was more; but never fear that I shall hurt your tender ears with ugly truths they cannot understand. After all, it was not of myself and my affairs, but of you and yours, that I wished to speak.'

'You helped me in old times,' said Linda soothingly. 'If you are in any difficulty, Bruno, I might perhaps—'

'No, no,' he interposed; 'not so bad as that. In Rome, and at our city of Velletri, I have friends, comrades, who would supply me if the worst came. Tell me of your engagements for the winter. I like to know your movements.'

'I start for Cairo very soon. I have been singing here during the season.'

'You are happy?' he asked, looking at her curiously.

'Quite, quite happy,' said Linda gaily.

'One thing more. I saw you leaving a gondola yesterday. Who was it with you?'

He spoke with a crafty nonchalance that did not impose upon Linda; she, too, had her share of Italian cunning.

'Did you see him?' she inquired promptly.

'No; I was looking at you.'

'Ah, then you didn't recognise Tebaldo, the tenor singer; you remember him, I daresay; he was a Velletrano, like ourselves.'

Bruno's countenance cleared.

'I know about him: yes, an honest fellow; he was a boatman on the Tiber, was he not?'

'Yes, yes,' put in Linda hastily; 'some gentleman was struck by his fine voice, had him taught for the stage. He sang here with me during the summer.'

'Well,' rejoined Bruno after a pause, 'if ever you wish to marry, my sister, and your choice should fall on an honest man of that sort, poor though I am, all that I have you and he shall share. Only,' his brow clouded over again with sullen contemptuous suspicion as he added, 'no entanglements with any of those rich vagabonds enjoying their pleasant idleness, made possible by the slaving and starving of the poor. If ever that chanced, I should no longer call you sister.'

The threat in itself did not sound very terrible to Linda. But she had an insurmountable dread of scenes with Bruno, and was bent on averting the present crisis.

She held a trump card in her hand, and came out with it now.

'Bruno,' she said, it was her turn to be self complacent, 'there was a count here—a Polish nobleman—who asked me to be his wife. I would not hear of it, or of him.'

'That was well,' he said. 'Keep to that path, if you wish to keep a friend and ally in me. And now we have talked long enough; we are attracting notice, which I want to avoid, for your sake even more than my own.'

They parted. Linda returned home on foot at hurried speed, reaching it breathless, in a state of agitation that deeply distressed her elderly *soubrette* Virginia. The young lady sank into a chair, fanning herself, smelling her salts, and exclaiming, '*Madre di Dio!* how my heart beats! Bruno, what have I done, that heaven should send me such a brother?'

'Has he been scolding you, then, the ruffian?' asked Virginia indignantly. Virginia was old, she was deaf and stupid, but attached after her manner, and Linda had no secrets from her. 'Or worse; threatening, I daresay.'

'Yes—no—I don't know,' said her mistress incoherently; 'he is a threat himself; I feel his presence like one. Who are these tyrants and oppressors he is always railing at? You, Bruno, are the only tyrant of whom I am really afraid.'

'Come, come, you are a child; what is there to fear?' said the other practically. 'He couldn't harm you if he wished. Thank the Virgin, we live in a civilised country. There are laws to protect us, not to speak of one to whom the signora's safety is as dear as his own. The signor Inglese—'

'Mr. Damian is in Rome by this time,' broke in Linda; 'Heaven be praised for that.'

Why she should praise Heaven was past Virginia's understanding. Only yesterday she had been inconsolable at his departure. And though Virginia (who knew her mistress very well) believed her to be a sensible and long-headed woman, on this one point she considered Linda as foolish as any schoolgirl could be, and never hesitated to tell her so.

Linda composed herself, and thought over their interview. She took counsel then with Virginia seriously, and the result was that they decided to leave Venice quietly the next morning. The chief part of their preparations for moving was made already, and it was an easy matter to hurry their departure. Anything to avoid a second, perhaps a stormy, interview with Bruno, who Linda felt was unlikely to be long imposed upon by the decidedly flattered picture of herself she had presented to him. Linda was no hypocrite; but as to braving personal explanations with a mortal like Bruno, whom she regarded as so wrong-headed and violent as to be scarcely responsible for his actions when provoked, it was out of the ques-

tion. For the rest, the sooner he knew the truth about her the better. And yet there was a perverse, lingering, mournful regret behind that so it should be. Although this brother had never entitled himself to her respect, nor yet merited her affection, the idea that he should lose all fellow-feeling for her, and judge her, as he infallibly would, more harshly than even she deserved, was still very bitter to her. For, underneath all her fear and aversion lurked a strange irrational feeling that they would never shake each other off, as it were a sense of some affinity of nature which not unfrequently involves a mysterious affinity of destiny too.

Perhaps of all the untruths Linda had told to her brother, the most glaring was that she was happy. Never had Virginia seen her so odd and restless and dispirited. Tossing over the articles in her dressing-case that night, she suddenly chanced on a trinket, a forgotten trifle that, however, when she had made a sale of her jewels a year ago, she had kept back from the hammer, a lyre-shaped gold clasp set with jewels. Virginia saw her snatch it up and cover it with kisses, whereupon the ancient maid remarked contemptuously,

'What a fuss about an old-fashioned brooch, to be sure!'

'It was the first thing he gave me,' said Linda pathetically.

Virginia was not touched. She was a woman who would speak her mind sometimes. '*Per Bacco*, I'm ashamed of you,' she declared. 'Are you not too proud to make so much more account of the hearts of these young highfliers than they of yours?'

Linda sprang to her feet and darted an angry glance at her handmaid. Her countenance over-spread; for a moment she looked

like Bruno. The suspicion faded, she smiled obstinately, and shook her head, saying waywardly,

'Nay, nay, he loves me very well still; and I—well, you were right, quite right. I loved him from the first moment I saw him, like a fool that I am.'

CHAPTER XIV.

THE VEILED STATUE.

OF all the rising sculptors at that time settled in Rome, not one but would have liked to change places with Valentine Romer. Even those whose position and fortune were made, envied him sometimes—as men past their prime envy those who have still the best to look forward to. But although few among the younger artists were counted more promising by connoisseurs, many stood higher in popular favour. For Val was an original, with rough knobs and angles of disposition in plenty, and had never knocked under to a human creature.

Such aggressive independence would have meant perpetual obscurity to a mediocre artist. It required no less signal talent and indomitable energy than Val possessed to absolve him from the necessity of clawing any person, private or professional, in his humour. The world wanted him, and must in the end accept him as he was born—a very rough diamond.

Already they consented to be good-naturedly amused at his candour, verging on brutality; his bluff humorous speeches were repeated as 'good things.' Men, whose statues are likely to bring in, literally, their weight in gold, can afford a certain license of action and expression. Already his studio was entered in the

guide-books as not the least interesting among the sights of Rome.

Far away from the well-known thoroughfares, on the open elevated ground known as the Caelian Hill, and within a stone's throw of the Porta Laterana, stood the Villa Marta. When Val Romer first took it, two years ago, his friends murmured over the site, so near the malaria-haunted Campagna. 'Welcome the malaria,' he replied grimly; 'a good scarecrow to keep visitors away:' curious idlers that devoured up the ambitious artist's precious time; locusts whose ravages he dreaded more than Roman fever. For himself, he had a constitution as tough as leather and as hard as iron, which it seemed as if nothing could shake.

The villa itself was of the humblest pretensions; a mere dot in a garden wilderness; an insignificant appendage to the adjacent long low building of white stone; a miniature Greek Doric temple, where the sculptor 'received,' and in whose surrounding sheds the sculptor worked.

The temple itself was in three divisions. The first and largest was ranged with statues, Val's finished works; so to speak, the gods of the fane, never long the same in this Pantheon. Val's productions were in increasing request. One feature, however, remained pretty constant: the majority of these gods were goddesses. Val's first successes had been obtained in renderings of different types of female beauty; his art instincts inclining him to this field in sculpture as the most promising, because that which offers a modern sculptor his best chance of fresh, and as yet unachieved, achievement.

Among the pale beauties on the ranks there is not a single Venus, or Amazon, or Grecian nymph competing for the first place in

your favour. Of the three that divide the palm, none are classical subjects. There is Carmen, the gipsy-girl—counted by some to be his happiest conception—a wild, untamable, supple creature of the woods, semi-human, like the Fauns of the ancients; Salome, an ideal of Oriental voluptuous beauty and grace; and Vashti, a majestic imperial figure, one grown 'rigid in resistance,' as it were turned to stone by grief denied expression, calamity beyond fathoming. It is on the strength of these statues three, the sculptor's latest and most ambitious works, that Rome has decided that Val's future is of importance to mankind, and his career is watched with interest.

Beyond, was a curtained-off adytum, where the sculptor worked occasionally; and here again a second curtain screened an innermost shrine containing a single statue.

The little temple was at all times a marvel of neatness, and ingenious, precise arrangement. Val was a martinet in such matters, as Brutus, a young Italian workman who was responsible for the order of the studio, knew to his cost. It had on its best face to-day. The acolyte, as he went round, detected traces of his master's hand: fresh flowers, the orange-trees newly trimmed, a statue or a bust's position shifted. And Brutus nodded his sagacious head, saying within himself,

'Miladi is coming.'

'Brutus, my son!' said a commanding voice from within the adytum.

'His servant!' responded Brutus promptly.

'Have you put straight the curtain that hung out of the perpendicular, and made me squint all day yesterday?'

'I have,' answered Brutus.

'And set the fountain spouting, as I desired?'

'It is done.'

'And is the studio swept and garnished? I counted at least a dozen dead leaves exposed and ready for you to come and bury them.'

'The signor, if he distrusts, had better come and see for himself,' said Brutus, whose feelings were wounded by this catechism.

'Then, Brutus, having done your duty like a simple Englishman, you may now go and be idle like a noble Roman for the remainder of the day. I say, Brutus, does it never seem strange to you that your forefathers should have conquered mine?'

'No, signor,' responded the glib Italian; 'for do I not see your excellency here choosing to submit himself to our laws sooner than to those of Great Britain?'

'Very good, Brutus,' said the sculptor, lifting the partition curtain and emerging from the adytum in his blouse and cap, tools in hand. 'But there is a stupid Act of Parliament in our country that decrees there shall every third day be a fog in London which takes two days to clear off. That, Brutus, is the law that makes an exile of your master, as I have often told you.'

Here Brutus, at the sound of approaching carriage-wheels, went off to open the garden-gates. The sculptor stood with the look of peculiar impatience on his face of a man awaiting something he dreads and desires in about equal measure. Then he came forwards, courteous, smiling, and bland, to receive the sitter, Lady Brereton, on whose bust he was at present engaged.

He was scrupulously polite to-day—why, he was almost conven-

tional—in other words he was on his guard. In a few minutes he and she are *vis-à-vis*, and he is noting fresh perfections in the clear-cut lines of her face.

Artists are privileged fellows. Lady Brereton had made a considerable sensation since her arrival in Rome, a few weeks before. Not one of the *jeunesse dorées* of the city but would have given worlds to be in Mr. Romer's shoes at this present moment. Diana kept her admirers at a more than respectful—a reverential distance. She had absolutely refused to sit for her portrait to any one in Rome; but when Sir Adolphus suggested a bust, she consented, merely stipulating that Mr. Romer, whose acquaintance they had recently made in England not long after a certain day when Val woke up to find himself famous, should be the modellist.

Never a good sitter, Diana this morning, by her constant changes of countenance, very soon exhausted the scant stock of patience with which Val was endowed. From exhortation he proceeded to exhortation, thence to command, thence to reproaches.

Lady Brereton liked to put him out of temper. It made her feel vaguely, 'If I were not what I am, I could be afraid of him. How delightful, to be once afraid!'

'Pray do not be too exacting to-day,' she said at last. 'I never profess to be able to pose for Patience on a monument, and something has happened this morning which has put me into particularly high spirits. Sir Adolphus has finally decided on remaining in Rome for the spring.'

'That is good news for me indeed,' said Val cheerfully. He saw on her face the shadow of a smile, betraying a passing feeling which gratified him, he hardly

knew why. 'The best of all good news,' he continued; 'for it means that you will be able to give me as many sittings for your bust as I may want, and that I shall not have to hurry, which I hate, or risk turning out a piece of work not so good as I could make it.'

There was a pause. Then she said, with a slight, not at all unpleasant, irony,

'I should like to be an artist. You ought really to be the happiest people in the world. Tell me, Mr. Romer, don't you consider it the ideal state?'

'How so?' asked Val cautiously.

'Because your work is all in all to you. Outside events can have no power to affect your mind or your life.'

'And you ladies, who sit to us for your portraits, may be thankful for it,' returned Val philosophically. 'Take myself at this moment. The Papacy may be overturned, the Stock Exchange abolished, the British constitution stand on its head, Lady Brereton's bust will not suffer—not an eyelash. The artist goes on with his work; his hand doesn't shake.'

'Exactly; and that is your good fortune—to be so absorbed in a thing that you can always put it first absolutely, and let the rest go. Do you not consider it so?' she asked insinuatingly, as if to provoke a denial.

'I do,' said Val stoutly. 'You are quite right. Art is the best mistress a man can have; she can never deceive or disenchant him. You see it's impossible she should betray his love, since there can be no question of her returning it.'

Presently Lady Brereton raised her eyes, saying,

'Might that not tell both ways?' Val glanced at her inquiringly.

'I know it is possible to make Art a sort of religion,' said Diana; 'that men and women come and immolate their lives to her service, as monks and nuns do to the Church, and find consolation there when they have failed to get their own will or way in the world. I do not think, though, the monks and nuns were happy always. Perhaps the artists are.'

Val preserved silence and an immovable countenance.

'Tell me,' she asked by and by, with irresistible frank interest, 'has she always been everything to you?'

'Yes, since I found, or fought, my way to her; and that, Lady Brereton, was nine years ago.'

'Ah, you had great difficulties to contend with, I know; I always heard that.'

Val was the most reticent of men, and especially on the subject of himself. It needed a Diana Brereton to draw him out.

'Yes, I had difficulties,' he replied; 'insuperable difficulties one would say. Yet here I am, you see, to prove the contrary.'

'I wish you would let me hear about them,' she said, 'and how you overcame them. Tell me; it will do me good. Life is made too easy, I often think, to such as myself.'

'O,' said Val simply, 'it was at starting that circumstances were my worst enemies.'

And Diana, who knew no more than that he was a man of no birth, listened prepared for a tale of struggles with poverty and obscurity.

'Claude Lorraine began life as a pastrycook,' said Val deliberately, 'whose pictures popes came afterwards to bid for, offering to cover them with pieces of gold. My case was far worse. My father had a hundred thousand pounds—'

If his object were to startle

his patroness he had succeeded. She listened amazed as he continued,

'To which I was born heir apparent, with nothing to learn but how to spend it. I was to have sunshine all day—even temperature—no frosts, no winds. Well, what came of all these fine prospects? At sixteen I was an orphan and a pauper. Ruin and death had come, destroyed my home, and cut me off with a shilling and an uncle, a solicitor in Bloomsbury. That was a change of air, and no mistake, Lady Brereton. But all this can have no interest for you, that I see. I don't know why I should inflict it.'

'Only inflict it,' she said, smiling, 'and I will tell you why another time.'

Val acquiesced politely.

'A change as nice and pleasant,' he resumed, 'as to be shot from the equator to the North Pole. If my soul had caught its death of cold, if all the milk of human kindness in me had been frozen up among those dear poor relations of mine, who wouldn't let me starve—' he stopped short.

'A solicitor, did you say?' put in Diana sympathetically.

'Yes. There was I nailed to a desk, with a quill behind my ear, a bad calculating-machine—like this.'

Diana was laughing heartily. Val had seated himself before a stand, stuck his chisel through his hair, and drawn a long puckered miserable face. Then he resumed his work and his dignity.

'And charity, charity, charity, O! dinned into my ears all day long, for fear I should forget I was a charity boy. My father had been wise and lucky, and had grown rich. These fellows had been stupid, and stuck, and I was to pay for it all! I know I put down in my note-book, that of all

the Christian virtues the hardest to bear with is charity.'

Again Lady Brereton laughed. 'What dreadful people!' she murmured.

'Of the whole pack the worst was a woman, aunt Patty, a spinster of forty.'

'Worse and worse,' sighed Diana.

'Long, lean, with piercing little eyes,' he said, screwing up his own in imitation, 'backed up by a pair of sharp spectacles. "Valentine," said those spectacles to me every day at dinner, "you worthless son of my worthless brother-in-law, you are eating the bread of charity. I'll take care it shall stick in your throat."'

'I think I hear her,' ejaculated Diana.

'Not an old maid of the old school,' he continued, 'given up to knitting and tea and scandal. Knitting she thought a useless coil, scandal enfeebled the mind, and tea the constitution.'

'I see her distinctly,' said Lady Brereton.

Val gave a few touches to the clay he was engaged upon, and then proceeded deliberately:

'If I had a yacht, and chose a figure-head, I should carve her; if I had a church, it should be dedicated to her memory. And as I have neither a yacht nor a church, I have named my little house after her, "Villa Marta."'

Lady Brereton raised her eyebrows in incredulous surprise.

'A woman who hates needle-work is of course never idle,' Val continued. 'Aunt Patty's hobby was modelling. There was a room in the house, where she worked, and in which I was forbidden, under pain of everlasting punishment, ever to put my head. I had had a glimpse once, and the sight of the clay, the modelling tools and casts, haunted me night and day.

Three months I endured it. One day, when she was out, I went in and modelled a hand, and left it as my *carte de visite* to surprise her. She was not superstitious, but told me since that for a moment she thought the arch-fiend had been there in her absence. After that she let me come in and draw designs for her; she sent for me in the evenings to teach me. One day she observed that *I* was teaching *her*. Without a word to me she went to my uncle, and resigned my appointment for me, saying I was a sculptor, and should never make anything but a bad clerk. My uncle objected. She did not try to convince him, saying she had not time, and it was besides of no consequence. She ruled the house; and I was sent to some marble-works. Once started in the right track, one has only to fight one's own way.'

'You must have fought well,' remarked Diana, 'to have got on so rapidly.'

'I had good luck,' said Val modestly. 'Of course starting so late I had to make up for lost time and work double. But if I have been so fortunate as to make my mark more quickly than others who deserve it as well or better, I lay it to the happy chance that a statue of mine chanced to attract notice at the late International Exhibition. It brought me to the front, and into favour, as only popular works can do.'

'The Glee Maiden, of course,' said Lady Brereton. 'I have heard so much of it. But I was out of England at the time, and missed seeing it, to my great regret.'

'It was sold,' he said carelessly.

To a royal bidder, as Lady Brereton remembered to have heard.

'Gone to Russia, exiled to

Siberia by this time, perhaps,' he said jestingly.

'And I am told you have made but one copy, which you keep here.'

He bowed assent.

'And which you will never show.'

'It is to save me from refusing applications to repeat it, which I don't want to do,' he said frankly.

'The Glee Maiden,' said Lady Brereton, perplexed. 'The name tells me nothing. Who was she?'

'The Glee Maiden is a Provençal girl, a female troubadour, minstrel at the courts of love. The name did not suggest the statue; I thought of it afterwards. My muse-musical is modern. It was neither a daughter of Apollo nor a St. Cecilia that I had in my imagination. An improvisatrice, such as you might meet with to-day, if you were lucky. One of those happy devotees we were talking of just now. Well, that statue made my reputation in London.'

'I know the rest,' she said, smiling. 'Your path, I suppose, was smooth thenceforward.'

'Smooth? I beg your pardon,' said Val, with animation. 'Nothing but hills of difficulty, if you please. It is the easiest thing in the world to make a reputation, and the hardest to keep it up. For that, one has to go on rising, rising steadily and distinctly, and for a very long time too.'

He paused a moment, and then resumed:

'My little Glee Maiden has had rivals. It was absolutely necessary I should make successors that should cut her out, and they say that I have. My best work has been done since. Yet with all her faults she is my pet child. Because she is the petrification of my earliest, freshest inspiration,'

he concluded, rather to himself than to Lady Brereton.

'It is very good-natured of you to have told me all this,' said she presently. 'I cannot tell you how it has interested me.'

'No thanks, no thanks,' he said plainly. 'You have repaid me already, though you don't know it. I cannot tell you how still you have been the last half-hour. I have made more progress than in all the sittings before.'

The sitter now intimated that she was tired, which brought the day's work to a close. The artist acquiesced, with a bad grace.

'And the Glee Maiden?' said Diana beseechingly.

With a helpless smile Val yielded, and, going towards the curtain that partitioned off the inmost division, he drew it aside, disclosing a veiled marble figure in a niche. Val lifted the gauze.

The simplicity of the composition was such that at first Diana was puzzled to say what it could be that made the effect so striking. It recalled no famous statue, ancient or modern. Of something, however, it did seem to remind her, but of what she could not tell.

A youthful figure, standing, leaning against a tree, her viol in her hand. The attitude was restful, the countenance inspired and strung up; the musical improvisation was just over, but the tone-poet's mind lingers in the clouds one moment longer, the moment here chosen by the sculptor.

'So that is your ideal,' she let fall as she gazed.

'An ideal impersonation of song,' corrected Val judiciously.

'It is very beautiful,' she said slowly, oppressed with the difficulty familiar to highly-cultured minds of expressing the intelligent admiration they only can experience. 'In spite of all I had

heard I had formed no idea of it.' She looked long and intently, then turned from the marble to the sculptor. Possibly a masterpiece from another hand, though eliciting equal admiration, would not have commanded the same flattering attention.

'Forgive me,' she said, with that mixture of light and earnest in manner that so surely perplexed her admirers, and that Val thought he understood and found so charming, 'but when I see that statue I must ask myself, not for the first time, as you know, what has England done that you, who belong to us by rights, should desert your country and your countrymen—'

She had touched a critical subject, a subject on which Val at this instant found no safety but in silence, and in silence he took refuge. Often, before this fair lady, this famous man found himself looking and feeling like a shamed schoolboy. She waited; then, assured her little speech had taken effect, she held out her hand, saying,

'I receive next Tuesday. Shall we see you?'

He promised to come, escorted her to the gates, and as the carriage drove off remained for some moments with his eyes fixed on the spot where it had disappeared.

Then he slowly retraced his steps to the temple, unconscious that Brutus was watching him narrowly, walked down between the two files of tutelary marble divinities, and flung himself on a seat in the adytum, with the air of a wrestler nerving himself for a tussle.

Not with an adversary, or with misfortune, but with himself. Every time that he and his lady-friend met now was followed by at least a quarter of an hour of mental anarchy. Val would have

given worlds to be as indifferent as he seemed. This still, deep, growing influence of the woman of the world over the artist had begun—how long since? He knows exactly.

It was the summer before last, at Hawkwood, Sir Adolphus's estate in Hampshire. Val, who in his character of one of the lions of the preceding London season, had formed a slight acquaintance with the Breretons, had been enticed down to their country place for a few days. There was some question of his designing a fountain for a certain site in the park, that decided his coming.

Diana soon saw he was a lion in more senses than one, less approachable and tamable than lions and Samsons in general. Did a fancy take her sometimes to draw his claws and be lion queen? Did she covet ascendancy in that quarter? She recognised his artistic power, and was not one of those to whom a warrant from Apollo carries no recommendation unless accompanied by something of Apollo's semblance. To hold the destiny of a genius in her hands, to be free to play fast and loose with the weal and woe of a man whose talent made the delight of millions, had a superior sort of fascination for her. She had never had such a thing on her captive-list.

Val's roughness and surly independence piqued her; but they were never or rarely offensive. He had the better part of good breeding which genius gives, and Sir Adolphus's wife was sated with the *petits soins*, the *fuderies*, *niaiseries* (things for which the English tongue has no equivalent, though they are at least as plentiful here as abroad) of her admirers in her own set, natures mentally and morally enervated, like herself. O to subdue this divine bear! to

make him pliable for her, and her alone!

One evening, that Val is just now recalling—a sultry July evening—there were a number of guests staying at Hawkwood, and Sir Adolphus had summoned the whole party out on the lawn towards ten o'clock to look at a comet, reported to be visible to the long-sighted.

Val was intensely interested in this heavenly body. So was Lady Brereton, only she could not see it. This made him very impatient. Well, he may try and point it out to her, only not through the telescope, which made her eyes ache.

They crossed the lawn to look at another constellation. The big cedar that stood in the centre separated them from the party—it overshadowed them, hid the sky, and its boughs murmured above their heads.

As they emerged from its shade, she paused an instant, and said enthusiastically,

'What a lovely night! Does not the garden look as if it were enchanted?'

The faint scent of the China roses on the terrace-wall, the restless swaying of the cedar-boughs, the rippling of the myriads of spiny leaves, the trickling of the water in the fish-pond, that graceful presence beside him, her light hand on his arm—yes, Val must acknowledge there was enchantment about.

'On such a night,' she continued, 'I think one could believe in anything one wished. Could not you?'

'I should beware,' he said. 'How if it were only to be undeceived by daylight?'

'Nay,' she said, 'some things, when we have felt them once, become realities to us for ever.'

Was she speaking to herself or to him? His brain was in con-

fusion; they stood silent side by side.

'Ah, I see it at last!' she said suddenly, having caught sight of the comet across the boughs.

Val, as they walked back to rejoin the rest, felt also as if a meteor had flashed across him.

From that moment he looked upon Diana with a less censorious and unsympathetic eye. Her faults might be faults of education; her charm was original. She was a woman of a superior mind, whose friendship any man might desire and be proud of.

He no longer discouraged her by curtness and reserve, when she interrogated him about art. She wished to remove from herself the reproach of aristocratic ignorance. She would be so grateful if he would give her hints as to the direction of her art-studies, of which she was so fond, so fond. Poor Val!

Though no ladies' favourite in general, he was adored by ladies in particular. His was the hard favour that acquaintance endears to us, as it becomes associated with an expression that we love, and that is more prominent than the clay. What inexhaustible energy of character lay there! What possibilities of exceptional achievement, or exceptional devotion!

Diana, when her intimate friends taxed her playfully with heartlessness and indifference, would reply, 'I was born too old for an infatuation.' Perhaps. But she cared to inspire one. Just now she was dominated by the idea of dominating a man's life from a distance; a man courted by not a few charming women, but of whom it would be said, 'He has never married, because of Lady Brereton. It is a chivalrous, exclusive attachment of his, an idea to which he is religiously faithful.' For this pur-

pose she had made up her mind he was to come and settle in London.

She then found she had a rival, whose interests and hers here threatened to clash, and that was his work. Had she known the trouble she was giving her rival at that moment she might have exulted. He had struggled to prevent them from mutual interference. That was no longer possible.

He could not settle himself to work again that day, and went presently for a stroll in the gardens of the neighbouring Villa Wolkonski.

Brutus, anxious about his

master's welfare, had made many ingenious excuses for intruding upon him ; but his reception had not been reassuring. He had smoked five-and-twenty cigarettes, though, which was good, remarked Brutus, picking up the ends.

Lady Brereton drove home thinking of the Glee Maiden. Strange, that such a prosaic piece of humanity as Val Romer should originate anything so full of poetry and refinement !

She was puzzling over a floating reminiscence. Suddenly she caught hold of it. ' Ah, the violinist who played at the Fenice ! It was she of whom the statue reminded me.'

THE VICTORIA CROSS:

~~Why~~ Major Creyke did not win it.

It was midwinter. The afternoon of a dull December day was drawing to a close, and as yet the lamps were not lighted in the drawing-room of the house which the Cotherstones called home. A blazing fire, however, lighted up the room sufficiently for little Mrs. Cotherstone to study the pages of a book which she held in her hand. The Colonel sat opposite, tired out by a hard day's work, and more than half asleep. The boy, now nearly a year old, was on the rug between them, holding a court-martial on his father's boots, occasionally pricking himself with the spurs, and making his tiny hands excessively dirty, his hands and his little embroidered frock.

'Ned,' remarked the Colonel's wife, *apropos* of nothing, 'I've been looking in the *Army List*.'

'Eh, what, my darling?' suddenly rousing himself into an upright position.

'I've been looking in the *Army List*,' she repeated.

'O, is that all? I thought something had happened to the boy,' sinking back in his chair again.

Reminded of the boy, Mrs. Cotherstone looked down, and, seeing his occupation, uttered a scream of disgust, which the child quickly echoed by a loud crow of delight.

'Dir—ty boy!' cried Mrs. Cotherstone, in energetic staccato tones; 'such a mess he's in. Ring the bell, Ned dear, please.'

The Colonel did as he was told, and a moment later our old friend Calcraft appeared, looking quite irreproachable in his faultless evening attire.

'Take him away, Calcraft,' cried the little lady; 'he has made himself so dirty with Colonel Cotherstone's boots.'

As Calcraft advanced, the child put out two dimpled arms to him, and expressed his satisfaction in a series of 'Boo-o-o-o's.'

'How fond he is of the child!' said the Colonel's wife, as the door closed.

'Yes,' answered the Colonel; he was rather sleepy.

'I've been looking in the *Army List*,' Mrs. Cotherstone announced for the third time, 'and I cannot find anywhere that Major Creyke has the Victoria Cross.'

'Of course not,' returned the Colonel, with a laugh.

'But he has it.'

'Certainly not.'

'But they always call him V.C. Creyke,' she said, in a mystified tone.

'It is only a nickname, child; he often called her child, though she had a son of age.'

'However did he get such a name? O, I am so disappointed, Ned. I have been fancying all sorts of bravery; and now it has gone.'

'O, he has bravery and pluck enough; you need not be disappointed,' he answered. 'He gained the name out in the Mutiny, though he did not win the Cross itself.'

'And how was it?' she asked, with deep interest.

'Well, I can only give you the merest outlines of the story,' he said, 'for it's a good while ago, and my head was in a state of confusion for a long time after that awful business had been cleared up. Creyke's father and mine were, from their earliest boyhood, upon terms of the closest friendship; their fathers had been the same before them. My father owned the Hall; Creyke's father was rector of the parish. Well, Creyke was only a year younger than I was, and somehow we fell into the same line as our fathers and grandfathers had done before us, and our friendship was, I really believe, more passionate and tragically inclined than even theirs. We were lucky enough to get into the same regiment, and we were unlucky enough to be sent to India, soon after which the Mutiny broke out; it was *just* after you were married, Mary.'

'Yes,' she replied; 'but the regiment did not go.'

'No. The 6th Lancers were short of subalterns, having lost several by cholera or misadventure, and I volunteered to go; they wanted two. Of course Creyke insisted upon going too, though his father and mine came down to us, and did their best to persuade us not to go. It was no good. I had made up my mind, and Creyke's mind was mine; so we went. It was all very jolly at first: we liked India, there was any amount of splendid sport. We liked the regiment, and Colonel Cornwallis was of a downright good sort, with the sweetest, prettiest little wife you ever saw. The fellows used to fight almost as to whether Mrs. Cornwallis or her sister, Miss Bannister, was the lovelier. For my part, I admired the Colonel's wife the more

of the two. I always did like fair women best. Miss Bannister was very dark, and it was no good any of the subalterns looking at her, for the Major went out in the same ship with her and made matters safe, though I don't think they were engaged. Well, the Mutiny broke out, and then we found what two splendid women they were! They had always been admired, but after the siege began they were simply idolised. How they worked! Nothing seemed too hard for them: they cooked and washed and nursed, until they were fairly worn out, always cheering us on, always ready in any emergency; they seemed to shrink from nothing. Mrs. Cornwallis made no distinction; it might be the sick baby of an officer's wife or of a private soldier, it was all the same to her; and as for Floss Bannister, I believe any man in the garrison would have walked straight into the enemy's lines at a word from her. Well, towards the end, Major Gurney was killed, and we thought the shock had killed her too; but, an hour after we had buried him, she went her rounds as usual. I never shall forget that night! Creyke and I were on duty together at one of the outposts, with one gun and perhaps a dozen men. We could see the black brutes moving about, but we couldn't hit them.

"I've had two shots at one of those black fiends," I heard one fellow growl to another; "and I've missed him both times."

"I don't expect we'll have no luck, since Miss Floss has given up comin'—not that we can expect it of her, the darlin';" for I must tell you she had been accustomed, in spite of her pressure of work inside the garrison, to visit the outposts every hour or so, ever since the chaplain died. At his

death she took up his work where he left it, poor chap, and she stuck to it bravely right up to the time of the Major's death. Every hour or so she used to come. Sometimes she sang a hymn or read a few words, or just said the Lord's Prayer; if a soldier's wife was ill, and he couldn't get off duty to see her, he might trust Miss Floss to bring him news half a dozen times a day. Well, after the Major was killed, we never expected to see her again; for it had been a terrible scene for her, and they carried her away from his poor body in a dead faint. We hadn't been back long from the funeral, and just as the troop-er ended, "we can't expect it of her, the darlin'," she appeared.

"You ought not to have come," Creyke said to her reproachfully. "No one expected it of you, after such a shock as you have just had."

"My duty is to the living," she said, in a perfectly calm voice. "I have done my duty to the dead, and I thank God for it. Major Gurney has shown us all how gloriously we may do our duty, and I will not be the first to sit down and say, 'I can struggle no longer.'"

"If her tears were dried up, Creyke's were not, and he turned away his head that she might not see them; he had loved her for months, poor chap, and I believe he would have given his life for Gurney's, if he could have taken that dreadful look of suffering out of her eyes. She turned away from him then.

"Is Robert Moss here?" she asked.

"Here, miss," he answered, stepping from behind another, with suspiciously wet eyes.

"Your wife seems a good deal better," she said. "I have just seen her, and she sent her love to you."

"Thank-you, miss," he answered, turning away with eyes overflowing again; then, in a choked voice, "Maybe you'll give my love to Mary, and say I'll come in as soon as ever I can get off."

'She only stayed a few minutes, and just as she was moving away, a great hulking Irishman ran after her and caught her gown—a great brute, that had been one of the worst scamps in the regiment.

"Shure, miss, darlin'," he blurted out, "ye won't try to stop the blissid tears from comin'? They'll do ye a power o' good, Miss Floss, an' we can't bear to see ye look like that."

'She lifted her soft dark eyes to his for a moment, and then she laid her little work-worn hand in his great fist.

"My tears are all burnt up, Michael," she said gratefully; "but I shall not forget what you said to me."

'And then she went away, and our watch dragged on. Each day, for the past fortnight, we had been sure matters could not get any worse, but somehow they did.

'It was not many days after this that they drove us back from that very outpost, and we were obliged to leave one of our few guns. The command had by that time fallen upon a man named Hood, a first-rate officer, though still rather young.

"It's a pity to let them have that gun," he exclaimed vexedly. "Their fire's bad enough, but to have our own guns turned against us will be too bad."

"Couldn't it be spiked, sir?" Creyke asked.

"Yes, of course; only the chances are ten to one against it's being done: the fire is so heavy there," he answered.

'Of course a dozen volunteers

stood out immediately, Creyke and I amongst the rest. I was chosen at once, and Creyke insisted upon going too. We were determined that the brutes should not have the gun; but, upon my word, it was anything but pleasant, running right in the face of the enemy's fire, with only a half-ruined wall for shelter. I can tell you we accomplished our task expeditiously—I know my only idea was how soon I could get out of danger; for we were in almost as much peril from our fellows' bullets as from the enemy's, as a continual cross-fire was kept up the whole time. Just as we turned for a rush, from the shelter of the half-ruined wall, I heard a yell from the black fiends behind us; and before I had gone three yards I came down to the ground with a crash, with what I knew must be a bullet in my shoulder and a second in my hip. Creyke heard only the yell, and ran on. I tried to get up and follow him; but I fell back, half-fainting with the pain, and shut my eyes, with a feeling that it was all up with me. I don't remember much more, until I found Creyke bending over me with more resolution in his face than I had ever seen in it before.

"It's all right, old chap," he said coolly. "The brutes have winged you, but I'll have you inside in five minutes."

"Go back, you'll only get hit yourself," I answered.

"Can you use your legs?" he asked.

"Got a ball in my right hip."

"I saw him take out his pen-knife and begin ripping up a scarf which happened to be lying near, and then I fancy I must have gone off again; for the next time I opened my eyes, Floss Baunister was bathing my fore-

head, and the doctor was bending over me.

"You're a noble fellow, Creyke," I heard Hood say. "If we are spared to get out of this, I shall recommend you for the Cross."

"I didn't do it for the Cross," I heard him answer coolly. "I'm glad we prevented those beasts getting the gun, and I couldn't leave Cotherstone to die out there. I should never have faced his father again, as long as I lived."

"Never mind your reasons," Hood said warmly. "They don't lessen your heroism, whatever they were."

"Creyke came round to us then, and asked if he could help in any way.

"Lend me a penknife," answered the doctor.

"O, by Jove, I've left it behind me," he said, in a disgusted tone. "I'll run and fetch it."

"You will do nothing of the kind," put in Hood imperatively.

"But it's the only one I have, sir," returned Creyke mildly.

"I forbid you to go; I distinctly forbid it."

"O, I must go, sir," he said quietly. "I sha'n't be a minute." And he did so, returning in a few minutes breathless, but unscathed. "Here's your knife, doctor," he said, as coolly as if he had fetched it out of the hospital.

"Now, sir," I heard Hood say sternly—I could only just hear him, for they were trying to move me, and I was turning very sick and faint again—"you have chosen to disobey my orders, therefore I shall not recommend you for the Cross. It is given for valour, not for foolhardiness."

"And that was how Creyke missed the V.C.," he ended.

"And what became of her?" Mrs. Cotherstone asked, wiping away her tears, which had been falling plentifully during the recital.

'The last time I heard of her, she was still living with the Cornwallises; and I fancy she would have yielded to Creyke's prayers, only she promised Gurney just at the last that she would meet him in heaven, Floss Bannister still. Of course you know, Mary, I don't mean that she has forgotten him; but perhaps she might have been induced to let Creyke care for her, but for the promise.'

'And Major Creyke?'

'Creyke! O, there will never be any one like her for him. He will love her all his life, as he will never love any human being. I wonder I never told you all this before, darling. I am afraid I've been so happy myself that I have never thought of other people's troubles; and somehow, I don't care to look back to the time when I had not found you again.'

Mrs. Cotherstone put her soft hand into her husband's with a most tender smile upon her fair face. 'I hope I may meet her some day, Ned,' she said earnestly. 'I should like to see the woman who saved your life for me; and as for Major Creyke—Ah, now I think I shall never be able to make enough of him.'

'Only don't make me jealous,' he interposed.

'And how was it,' she asked presently, 'that you came back to the Cuirassiers?'

'My darling, at heart we were only volunteers—at least, that is to say, our interests and pride were all centred in the old regiment. We always looked upon ourselves as Cuirassiers; and as soon as I had a chance of a troop in the old regiment, I took it. The Cornwallises had left then, for the Colonel was too badly wounded to be fit for service again; and as Floss Bannister was gone, Creyke exchanged at once, though he lost ever so much seniority by doing so.'

'Will he ever marry, do you think?'

'Floss would not have him.'

'Ah, but I meant any one else. Men do such things, you know, Ned.'

'Do you think I could ever have married any one but yourself?' he asked.

'Of course not,' she replied indignantly.

'Well, then, I don't think Creyke will either.'

THE NUMBERING OF THE PEOPLE.

IN the next session of Parliament, after the totalling of the election, and probably during the first weeks of the new legislative assembly, provision will have to be made for the decennial counting of heads throughout Great Britain and Ireland. Next year a more or less complete census of the population will be taken, in accordance with the enactment which first came into force under Mr. Pitt's Administration in 1801.

It might very well be asked whether such a census will much longer be necessary under the system of registration which for the last few years has been made increasingly close and definite; but it is obvious that in order to obtain an accurate survey of relative ages, conditions, class of habitations, and other particulars of the population of the kingdom at stated periods, a system of district enumeration is more prompt and, in some important respects, more efficient than any results which could be secured by a tedious compilation and comparison of parish and official registers of births, deaths, and marriages. As a matter of fact, however, the institution of a decennial census came into operation more than a quarter of a century before any complete and general system of registration was established; for though parochial and non-parochial, official and non-official registrars of baptisms, marriages, and deaths were appointed or permitted from the times usually known as the Middle Ages, when the monastic records of the principal people of

the district were kept in the *scriptorium* of the monastery, no regular plan of civil registration was adopted until in 1833 a Select Committee of the House of Commons was appointed to inquire into and report on the state of parish registers, and on a general system for registering births, marriages, and deaths in England and Wales. Curiously enough, the most complete of the earliest records (next to the monastic entries made in missals and devotional books) were those of the refugees who escaped from religious persecution and settled in England, forming communities of their own. Forbidden in France to celebrate marriages, or to have their children baptised, except in Roman Catholic churches, their own 'temples' being desecrated and destroyed, the *émigrés* took particular care to preserve the registers of marriage and baptism in the numerous churches which they founded in England. Dating from the records of the community of Walloons at the church of St. Julien at Southampton in 1567 to those of the various French and Dutch chapels in Soho, Hoxton, and Spitalfields at the end of the last century, a large number of such memorials came into the possession of the Registrar-General in 1833, along with those of the Society of Friends, which alone amount to above 1600 volumes, in which the entries are so accurately made as to represent the succession of the members of that body from a period about fifty years after the first organisation of the followers

of George Fox, and the formation of the 'Quakers' into a recognised sect. These early records, often containing full particulars, properly attested, and evidently in many cases accompanied by proper certificates, were of the utmost importance to people who might have sought in vain for legal registration at a time when the civil and the parochial registration were alike imperfect and uncertain.

Other nonconforming bodies followed the example of the French Protestants and the 'Friends' by keeping more or less accurate memoranda made by their officiating ministers. Parochial registration, which began after the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII., was ordered to be continued in the various churches, and was partially supplemented by an Act of the Commonwealth appointing a civil registrar to be elected by the inhabitants in every parish; but the entries, except those of marriage, were not properly attested; and at the Restoration the whole charge of registration was again placed in the hands of the clergy, many of whom made use of the books for chronicling all kinds of local occurrences, a practice which would have been not only excusable, but even commendable from one point of view, if registers themselves had been regularly and intelligibly kept. But these clerical gossips often forgot to enter the full particulars and dates of births, marriages, and deaths in their ambition to record extraordinary harvests, executions of murderers, strange discoveries, and such matters as are now found in those paragraphs of modern newspapers which in the dull season amuse the world with announcements of the growth of enormous gooseberries or references to showers of frogs. Worse than this, however, the registration-

books were frequently open to all kinds of depredation, and were even lent to the friends or acquaintances of the parson or the clerk, while the older volumes were actually used as waste-paper. A clergyman of the good old sporting school found the vellum leaves admirably adapted for conversion into labels for the game which he consigned to his acquaintances in London; while a sartorial parish clerk discovered that the leaves were convenient for cutting into strips to be used for measures. It was even declared that some of the parchments, which might have been inscribed with the most important evidence for securing the succession to estates, were made into stiffeners for fancy articles of needlework like kettle-holders, or were converted into handy sheets whereon to inscribe patterns for lace or embroidery. Between the careless custodians and the negligent recorders, who frequently made a mere abbreviated memorandum of marriage or baptism with the stump of a pencil on the back of a letter, and afterwards forgot to enter even these meagre particulars in the book after they had obtained their clerk's fee, the whole registration of the country was in a condition to call for a sweeping reform. The attempt to change the entire system began with a Select Committee of the House of Commons appointed in 1833; but after a multitude of witnesses had been examined and the amazing story of negligence had been confirmed by evidence which filled a number of Blue-books, it was found that the whole plan of registration must be confided to civil instead of ecclesiastical authority; and in 1836 Lord John Russell introduced the Bill which came into operation in the following year, prescribing

proper forms of registry, attestation, and certificates, and securing the safe custody of future registers in local registration offices, while authenticated copies were to be deposited in an office in London. Since this time births and deaths have been registered by the Civil officers; and though the clergy of the church keep a record of marriages, a duplicate is retained by the officer of the registrar, and a wedding may now take place at the registrar's office, where it becomes a legalised civil contract.

It may be well to call the attention of future novelists and dramatists to the date at which the present system came into operation, since in case of any revival of the admirable expedient by which the villain of romance or tragedy temporarily triumphs in the falsification or destruction of a parish register, and the deposition 'of the rightful heir, it is desirable that the plot should be cast anterior to 1833. Whether any ingenious writer of fiction has ever founded a sensational episode on a false representation made to a census enumerator is doubtful; but it is by no means certain that such an event might not supply a striking incident. That evasions and misdirections have been practised in these matters ever since the time when William III. ordained a tax upon bachelors and widowers for five years, for the purpose of carrying on the war with France, admits of no dispute, and the records of the census of the eight decades now nearly past contain some particulars to which a delicate and paternal government has not thought it necessary to affix names, but which are significant of the peculiar difficulties that beset the conscientious officer.

It is to be remarked that in the first census, and in that of 1811,

no account was taken of the ages of the population, and in 1821 the statement of ages was left optional. In 1831 the number of males of twenty years and upwards was required; in 1841 this inquiry became closer, and then there was a revolt in the female heart, and, for aught we know, in many a male heart also. Another cause of anxiety was a suspicion that the ages of men were required in order that those within certain limits might be 'drawn for the militia,' and it is probable that many omissions were made on this account by some members of the family contriving not to be at home on the night to which the census return was applicable. But though on the last census night, that of Palm Sunday, 1871, the 32,606 enumerators were ready to make up above five million schedules from that number of families and lodgers living in 4,259,032 houses in every shire in England and Wales, it may be concluded that the 22,704,108 souls included in the returns represented pretty well the entire population. Certainly there were people who, objecting to the personal scrutiny of the enumerators (a rather 'fishy' kind of officers, necessarily selected from a host of candidates willing to earn about five shillings a day by rather harassing work), sent their schedules privately to the Registrar-General with his permission. There was the wealthy spinster of advanced age, who barred up the doors and windows of her house in the country, defied the inquisitor, declared her determination to be fined 20*l.* rather than reply to his impertinent inquiries, and finally was soothed by a letter and sent particulars to the Registrar. There was the gentleman of property who was willing to undergo any penalty

'rather than commit the crime for which David suffered,' and whose religious scruples were respected, especially as the enumerator obtained all the information he required, probably at the nearest ale-house. There were the people who showed fight and ejected the obnoxious inquirer and were fined. There was the gentleman who neither knew his own age nor that of his child, and declined to commit perjury by making a guess at either; and there was the humorous gentleman described as an 'author,' who quoted the 'opinion of his wife' in the last column of his schedule, and put himself down as 'both idiot and lunatic.' But on the whole the returns were doubtless a truthful representation of the age, condition, and number of the people.

Should any writer of works of imagination be inclined to found a romance upon the night of the census in 1881, he will find no more wonderful story than that narrated from the schedules themselves; coming, as they will, not only from remote shires, country villages, lonesome moors with a few scattered cottages, wide wolds with huts dotted here and there, sleepy cathedral towns, cosy home-steads, vast centres of industry amidst factories and furnaces, barracks, boats, ships, and barges on rivers, workhouses, jails, hospitals, and even from amidst the homeless and the destitute brought to some kind of local habitation and name on that one night of all the year. Will the returns give us any particulars of girls and

boys at Board schools, as well as vagrant children and juvenile criminals—small integers in the great sum of national life?

Here in the great centre of it all, this mighty city, the story culminates, though in its midst, in the City itself (so called), the population, estimated by its nightly number, diminishes year by year as the suburbs increase. The enumerated population of London on the night of April 2d, 1871, was 3,251,804, but this was only the Registration district; and in the Metropolitan and City Police division, including a ring of 12 to 15 miles round Charing Cross, the numbers were 3,883,092, while another outer ring contained 631,288. These figures represent an increase respectively of 1·88, 1·49, and 4·19 per cent per annum from 1861 to 1871; and the marvel will probably be repeated in the next report of the Registrar-General, who may well rise to enthusiasm, and make an official return the occasion for an exulting reference when he says 'to the eye from Holwood in the south near the source of the Ravensbourne, and to the ruins of an old Roman city, the dome of St. Paul's and a thin cloud of smoke are almost the sole signs of the millions living along the valley of the Thames;' and that 'looked at in any light, the magnitude and growth of London are marvellous, and the causes invite the careful scrutiny for which the subsequent analysis of the facts collected at the census will serve as material.'

OUR LONDON NOTE-BOOK.

THE remarkable success which attended the production of Mrs. Brassey's simple and charming narrative of her voyage round the world in the *Sunbeam* has induced her to make public other records of her travels. In her latest book, *Sunshine and Storm in the East*, she gives, by way of contrast, the story of two different visits to the Mediterranean—the one in 1874, the other in 1878. The title of the book is to be taken not literally, but metaphorically; and I certainly cannot congratulate Mrs. Brassey upon its aptness, any more than I can congratulate M. Gustave Doré on the enigmatical design which renders the cover of the volume striking indeed, but eminently unsightly. The first portion of the book, written, as it was, before the *Voyage in the Sunbeam*, and also previous to the stirring events which have caused so many changes in the East, takes but a feeble hold upon the reader's interest, though it is lightly and pleasantly written. It is the second portion, narrating the authoress's visit to Cyprus and Constantinople in 1878, that naturally attracts one's attention most. Of Cyprus Mrs. Brassey gives a depressing account, which will no doubt please those who, for party reasons, inveigh against the policy which annexed that island, but will only sadden the general reader. However, it is not my intention to criticise Mrs. Brassey's pleasing pages seriously, but to give some idea of their contents.

Here, now, is a humorous incident which I am sure will provoke a smile: 'On the summit [of Mount Athos] there is the strictest monastery in the world. Not a female animal of any kind is allowed within miles, so that the monks have to do without milk or fresh eggs even, and travellers are not allowed to carry even *dead hens* on their saddles for provision. A few years ago two English ladies landed here from a yacht. As most of the men here wear petticoats and the women trousers, and the monks have not much experience in such matters, they did not discover the sacrilege that had been committed for some time; and then you may imagine their horror and disgust, and the penances they had to perform, poor things!'

The monks of Mount Athos may well be excused for not being able to distinguish females from males by their attire, seeing that even the practised eyes of men and women of the world are liable to be deceived sometimes. In proof of this I may recall an incident which actually happened four years ago to my knowledge, and I have a faint idea that it has since done duty in one of the comic journals. I will put it dramatically. Scene: Ladies' waiting-room at railway-station. Enter young lady in the ulster and 'pot-hat' of the period, with really no distinguishing mark of sex about her. Great commotion amongst knot of middle-aged

ladies at the other end of the room. At last one is deputed to act as spokeswoman, who walks up to the intruder, and with severe indignation exclaims, 'I don't know whether you are aware of it or not, sir, but this is a *ladies'* waiting-room!' Amusement of intruder, fuss of middle-aged ladies, theatrical unbuttoning of ulster, explanation, apologies. *Tableau*. With that scene in my mind, I confess to feeling little surprise at the mistake made by these unsophisticated recluses.

Perhaps the most interesting passages in Mrs. Brassey's book are those which tell of her visits to the harems, and of the impressions produced. The ladies of the East are no longer the poor spiritless creatures they used to be. They have begun to rebel against the tyranny of the despotic lords of creation; and we shall certainly hear at no very distant date of a revolution in the seraglios, and of a general strike for freedom amongst the women. Even so far back as 1874 Mrs. Brassey observes that 'the thin end of the wedge is in already; and, in spite of the Sultan Valideh's edicts, the yashmaks get thinner and thinner every day, till in many cases they are little more than a tulle veil. The broughams containing the ladies from the harems draw up by the mosques of Bymzel at Mashleck, or the gardens at Chumleyjah, the negroes and eunuchs discreetly turn their backs, and a good deal of flirting and sign-making goes on.' The children of the present day in Turkey, Mrs. Brassey assures us, are brought up to think the system of yashmaks and confinement a most tyrannical custom and not to be endured. Fuad Pasha, who accompanied the Sultan to England and Paris in 1867, was stoutly in favour of

the freedom of women, and declared, in a memorable speech on a public occasion, 'that Turkey would never take its proper place till the walls between the men's apartments and the harem were broken down, and the softening and purifying influence of women was allowed to be felt.' One Turkish lady of spirit said to Mrs. Brassey, 'Though my husband is not so very particular himself, I don't believe he will ever do anything to emancipate us or get us places at the theatre. They are all alike—such *Turks*!—and are too glad of an excuse to go out alone and enjoy themselves.' I think, by the way, that I can sometimes hear that charge brought against Western husbands also!

These were Mrs. Brassey's experiences of harem life in 1874. In 1878 she writes: 'The last four years seem to have added greatly to the amount of liberty they enjoy. They are now much less particular about seeing gentlemen. . . . A few months ago Princess Nasli went to Egypt, and was not allowed to return to Constantinople. She put on a thick yashmak and feridjee, borrowed 1000 francs, and travelled back with her English maid. As soon as they had made a clear start they threw off yashmak and feridjee, and travelled as two English ladies, until they reached Constantinople, where they again assumed the Oriental costume. Within comparatively recent years such a proceeding on the part of a Turkish lady would have been rewarded by the bowstring, the sack, and the Bosphorus. Not so very long ago, 600 women of the Imperial harem actually suffered this fate, their bodies being sunk in sacks in the Gulf of Ismiel, close to where our fleet has been lying recently.'

These fair ladies of the harem evidently intend to assert their rights forcibly, and it is clear that their emancipation cannot long be delayed. Mrs. Brassey herself may probably have more effect in bringing about the revolution than she imagines. For the sight of her enjoying such perfect freedom, wandering in that delightful fashion over the world with her husband and children, must have stirred their envy and made them more bitterly discontented with their own lot than ever. Before another decade closes, who knows, we may have some Turkish lady following Mrs. Brassey's example—sailing round the globe in her yacht, and recording her impressions of the world, so long hidden from her, in a book as bright, as pleasant, and as entertaining as *Sunshine and Storm in the East*.

That a second edition should be exhausted, and that French and German translations of Mr. T. H. S. Escott's work on contemporary England—*England; its People, Polity, and Pursuits*—should be forthcoming, sufficiently attests the success of the work, and proves the reality of the want which it has supplied. These two volumes give a clear account, not only of contemporary institutions, but of contemporary tastes, fashions, and occupations. Accuracy of statement is combined with popularity of treatment; and if the writing is easy, its easiness is not of the kind which makes difficult reading. The book can scarcely be better described than by saying that it tells one what every well-informed person ought to know, and what very few people, as a matter of fact, do. It is not a history, but a series of nineteenth-century pictures; not an encyclopedia, but a survey. It is a book to be bought, and to be kept in a

handy position on one's library-shelves; but it is one which is something more than a work of reference. Its chapters and its parts are closely connected, and strictly continuous in their interest and their argument. Mr. Escott works up from the particular to the general, from the individual citizen to the mighty aggregate of the British empire. He commences with the English village, and he ends with that larger England which lies beyond the seas. He propounds no abstract propositions, but gives us concrete facts, picturesque sketches, graphic descriptions. England at work and England at play; towns of business and towns of pleasure; politics and society; clubs and drawing-rooms; art and literature; music and science; the business and organisation of law, finance, education, local government,—these are some of Mr. Escott's central themes. The work is well planned and well executed. What the author's opinions are on the different topics of the day—political, industrial, and religious—is suggested rather than obtrusively expressed, yet suggested with just enough of definiteness to give a pleasant flavour of individuality to the whole. The book has now run the gauntlet of the whole British and American press, and it is to the infinite credit of Mr. Escott that his reviewers should have failed to detect any single serious misstatement in these two volumes. This of course is mainly due to the fact that our author has had the good sense to submit every chapter containing controversial matter or complex statements to recognised experts, whose names are given in the preface.

I have not for a long time read any correspondence that has interested and amused me so much

as that of the late Mr. Macvey Napier, recently published. Mr. Napier edited the seventh edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and succeeded Jeffrey in the editorship of the *Edinburgh Review*, a post which he filled from 1829 till the year of his death, 1847. The selected correspondence which his son has given to the world contains letters from the best-known literary men of the century: Carlyle, Chalmers, Macaulay, Hallam, Brougham, Bulwer Lytton, Jeffrey, James Stephen, Thackeray, Dickens, G. H. Lewes, Lord John Russell, and a host of other familiar names. The most entertaining feature of these letters is the outspoken criticism upon their fellow contributors in which the writers for the *Edinburgh* indulge when corresponding with the editor of the *Review*. For example, Lord Cockburn writes of Macaulay, 'I think the brilliancy of his style, especially on historical subjects, the worst thing about him. Delighting, as I always do, in his thoughts, views, and knowledge, I feel too often compelled to curse and roar at his words and the structure of his composition. As a corruptor of style he is more dangerous to the young than Gibbon. His seductive power greater, his defects worse.'

In a letter of considerable length Dickens gives his views on the 'punishment of death,' on which he purposed writing an article for the *Review*. He states it as his opinion that the punishment of death has a 'horrible fascination for many of those persons who render themselves liable to it,' and that 'it produces crime in the criminally disposed, and engenders a diseased sympathy—morbid and bad, but natural and often irresistible—among the well

conducted and gentle.' And he proposes discussing the questions, 'whether it be for the benefit of society to elevate even this crime to the awful dignity and notoriety of death, and whether it would not be much more to its advantage to substitute a mean and shameful punishment, degrading the deed and the committer of the deed, and leaving the general compassion to expend itself upon the only theme at present quite forgotten in the history, that is to say, the murdered person.' Unfortunately Dickens was never able to find time to write his proposed article, and I do not know that any one else has ever ventilated that view of the subject—a very suggestive and important view in my opinion.

I do not know who Mr. Richard Ford may have been, but he appears to have written an article in the *Edinburgh* on Borrow's *Bible in Spain*; and in a subsequent letter to Napier, he writes, 'You, like many, nay most, somewhat distrust Borrow. I who know him and the country believe his work to be a true honest transcript. He is half gipsy, half jockey, and half Methodist; but as he really writes down *himself* exactly as the fit is on him, the world, crediting his worse portion, disbelieves his better. He is one of the most extraordinary mortals in person and habits that ever crossed my path; his conversation and his private letters are nothing but pages of his book.' Now I too know something of George Borrow personally. I have enjoyed his society, and listened for hours to his original and fascinating conversation; but the impression left upon me by that intercourse is very different from that left upon Mr. Ford. George Borrow I will

admit to be 'half gipsy,' that goes without saying ; but 'half jockey,' nothing could convey a more erroneous idea of the man except, perhaps, the term 'half Methodist.' Borrow had a keen eye for horse-flesh, and was passionately fond of a wild gallop on a thoroughbred ; but when I call up to my mind his tall, massive, colossal figure, his keen piercing dark eyes, his fine striking features, I am irritated at the epithet 'half jockey.' And as to 'half Methodist,' who that ever met George Borrow would dream of applying such a term to so fearless and independent a thinker and speaker. I daresay the editor of these letters is not aware that George Borrow is still living. I saw him not long ago at the British Museum, an old man now ; the straight back and broad shoulders bent wofully beneath the burden of his fourscore years ; the firm determined stride dwindled now into a feeble shuffle ; but something of the old fire and the dark bright eyes yet. He was one of the finest-looking men physically I ever saw. There is hardly a man living, I suppose, whose career has been more remarkable and adventurous than his ; and his books have a peculiar charm, both of style and thought, which should render them far more widely read than they are.

It is told of a now famous Prussian general that, when his opinion that England was no longer safe from invasion was sneered at by certain Englishmen in his presence, he laughingly said, 'But we have already invaded your country. There are some hundreds of thousands of us there already. They are mostly drilled soldiers. They are all bound to serve the Fatherland. We have only to supply them with arms ;

and, look you, there is a great hostile army in your midst, and the invasion of England by the Germans is a *fait accompli* before you know where you are.' I do not think we need view this invasion with any apprehension. Indeed, if it comes to that, there is, I suppose, no other country in the world which has suffered and still suffers so many irruptions of foreign invaders as our own. Not the least interesting among these peaceful invaders of our shores are those young gentlemen from Japan, of whom we have some hundreds in our midst, and who, in spite of their close imitation of European dress, are easily detected by their pronounced Mongolian features. I have met some of these young Japanese from time to time, and been struck with their intelligence and good-manners. But it is not easy to get from them much information about their own country. I fancy the reticence on this point must be the result of strict injunctions from the home authorities, at whose instance they are sent over here to study. I confess to a deep interest in Japan ; and I have good reason to believe that this feeling of interest is pretty general throughout England. That being so, I am sure any book which throws light upon the home-life of the Japanese will be eagerly read. Such a book I have just been perusing. Not a ponderous book of travels, you must understand, but a racy, lively, amusing sketch of Japanese society. The said sketch is embodied in Mr. Mounteney Jephson's novel, *A Pink Wedding*. Readers of *London Society* do not need to be told with what spirit and 'go' Mr. Jephson writes ; but in addition to the usual attractions of his stories, *A Pink Wedding* has the merit of containing the

most humorous, graphic, and entertaining pictures of Japan and the Japanese which have yet been published in this country. For that reason, if for no other, the book is well worth reading.

There is a passage in Mr. Jephson's book which brings us back to George Borrow again, for it suggests to me the possible realisation of an idea of his. When last I met him (*ehéu, fugaces labuntur anni*!), some twenty years ago or more, his hobby was China and the Chinese. He had just mastered the language, and he expressed his firm conviction that the Chinese are destined to be the ruling race of the world. In support of this view he pointed to the extraordinary manner in which they were spreading themselves over the world. In America and Australia they swarm. Wherever they go they cheapen labour. They are content to be hewers of wood and drawers of water. In that way they insert the thin end of the wedge; and finally, when they have monopolised all the labour of the world, they will suddenly rise some day in their millions upon their indolent and enervated masters, and crush them under foot. That prospect, I admit, seems to me somewhat remote at present, so far at all events as Europe is concerned; for John Chinaman has not made his appearance in any force here yet. Perhaps the labour-market is not now ready for him. There was talk, some little time ago, of starting a gigantic laundry in Kensington, to be worked entirely by Chinese laundrymen—the most skilful exponents of the art of washing in the world. But apparently the scheme has collapsed, for I have heard nothing more of it. That would have been the first encouragement to John China-

man to invade our labour-market. Failing this, I would suggest another opening for Celestial enterprise in England. That is the waiter business. I am indebted to Mr. Jephson for the idea. Listen to his description of Chinese waiters, and I am sure you will agree with me that the idea is worth developing.

'These China boys,' writes Mr. Jephson, 'when properly looked after, as they are in the leading mercantile houses in China and Japan, are the perfection of waiters. Dressed in a loose flowing garment of pale-blue silk, knickerbocker-like articles of the same hue and material, white-silk continuations, half-gaiters, half-stockings, gartered with sashes of pale-blue silk, and wearing embroidered shoes, with paper soles three-quarters of an inch thick, the China boy stands behind his master's chair, picturesque, clean, and attentive. In his paper-soled shoes he goes about as noiselessly as a mouse, and all you see of him, as he places your plate, or hands you a dish, are his taper clever-looking fingers: a trifle long in the nail, perhaps, are these same fingers; but as these appendages are invariably well kept, this is of no consequence, and is at any rate better than the nail-bitten thumb of a European waiter.'

To be well waited upon is one of the most delightful luxuries of civilised life. The ideal banquet of the Sybarite is only realised when there are perfect waiters, whose presence is never obtruded upon the guest, because they seem but the invisible ministers to his unspoken desires. Yet who is there who can boast of possessing such a treasure? The nearest approach to a perfect waiter I have met with has been an intelligent

and well-drilled English servant. I like not your French, Italian, or German waiter, though, perhaps, the average of excellence is higher among these than among those of our own race, which supplies the two extremes, the few best and the many worst waiters in the world. Of all nationalities commend me to the Irish for the most execrable specimens of the *genus* waiter. But these Chinese boys, as described by Mr. Jephson, seem to me to come nearer the *beau-idéal* of a waiter than anything we have at present in Europe. What bold speculator will import some of them? I should have no objection whatever to seeing the 'Heathen Chinee' introduced into England, in any or every branch of domestic service. He is an excellent cook, a superb laundryman, and a perfect waiter. He asks for far less wages than we pay our incompetent native article. Then why not give him a chance of solving for us that perplexing domestic problem: 'What are we to do for our servants?'

At the beginning of the present century there were some very curious notions about France and Frenchmen prevalent among the uneducated classes in England. The prejudice against foreigners was very strong; indeed they were hardly admitted to be human beings like ourselves, and the idea of their being Christians was scouted as absurd. Dean Ramsay tells a story of an old Scotch lady who piously attributed the success of the British troops in the Peninsular war to the fact that we were 'a prayin' people'; and when it was hinted to her that perhaps the French also prayed, she retorted disdainfully, 'Hoot! the jabberin' bodies, wha could unnerstan' them?' Readers of *Adam Bede*—

and who has not read that masterpiece of fiction?—will remember the sage remarks of Mr. Craig, the gardener, upon the French, remarks which were accepted by his hearers as gospel, and, indeed, embodied the belief of the bulk of Englishmen in that day. 'Why it's a sure thing,' said that dogmatic Scotchman; 'and there's them 'ull bear witness to 't—as i' one regiment when there was one man a-missing, they put the regimentals on a big monkey, and they fit him as the shell fits the walnut, and you couldn't tell the monkey from the mounseers.' But since then we have purged ourselves of a good deal of our stupid insular prejudice; we no longer pride ourselves on our ignorance of continental manners and customs, and you will find that most Englishmen have a tolerably correct idea of the fashions and habits of Frenchmen. The converse, however, strange to say, is not true of our neighbours. The French—even those of the better class—are extraordinarily ignorant of all that pertains to English social life. They still regard us socially as only half-civilised, and are ready to believe any monstrous cock-and-bull story of English eccentricity which their imaginative journalists foist upon them. There are London correspondents of the French journals who deliberately foster these grotesque ideas, and with the most barefaced impudence coin stories to illustrate the popular theory of English society. They do so, I suppose, because they know the readers for whom they cater would not believe them if they took any other view of the humours of English life.

But not even this poor excuse can be alleged in extenuation of the preposterously absurd mis-

statements made by grave and accomplished *littérateurs*. The Abbé Vidieu, whose work on divorce M. Alexandre Dumas fils has just endeavoured with such serious elaboration to refute, tells his readers that it is still a common sight to see the squares of London on certain days filled with coarse and ribald crowds assembled to witness *the sale of wives by their husbands by public auction!* He describes these miserable women in touching language, which must have brought tears to the eyes of his French readers. He dwells upon their downcast eyes and their dejected air, as, each with a rope round her neck, the end of which her husband holds, they stand there waiting to be bargained for and sold! This relic of savage barbarism, the abbé says, is the result of the adoption by England of the hateful doctrines of the Lutheran Reformation! And yet these are the people who talk of 'insular prejudice' and the 'stupid ignorance' of our benighted islanders! Well, well, we must put up with it; 'our lively neighbour the Gaul' is not a bad creature in his way; but he is vain, vain to the verge of sublimity. It pleases his vanity to contrast himself favourably with *ces barbares Anglais*. He feels morally elevated by the contrast. It might be dangerous to rob him of this pleasing illusion. He is nothing if not conceited; let us leave him to enjoy his conceit unmolested. We can laugh heartily at him to ourselves; what matter that he does not hear our cachinnations, and is unconscious of our ridicule!

The taste for pictures seems to increase every year. Not a season passes in London now which does not witness the opening of two or three new picture-galleries, or at

least exhibitions of pictures; and such shows must presumably pay, or else there would not be so many of them. New Bond-street swarms with so-called 'Fine Art Exhibitions,' some permanent, some ephemeral, but all apparently well patronised by the public, from which fact I gather that a popular interest in art has been awakened, and is being daily developed. Already two new claimants for favour and patronage during the season of 1880 are in the field—the *Graphic Gallery* and the *Dramatic Fine Art Gallery*. I have visited both, and will therefore note my impressions for the benefit of my readers. The *Graphic Gallery* is a modest little exhibition, started by the proprietors of the *Graphic* with the object of benefiting the funds of two excellent charities for the relief of distressed artists. I went there with the expectation of finding a few idle gazers sauntering about, but to my amazement found the small room crowded. I had to attach myself to the end of a *queue* of visitors, and resign myself patiently to my fate. And it was a severe trial of patience, I must admit. The great attraction of course is the group of a dozen pictures, in which twelve well-known artists have given specimens of their ideal of feminine beauty. The pictures are ranged in a semi-circle, each on an easel, with the backs to the entrance, so that the stream of sight-seers has to slowly file round in procession. The promoters of the exhibition, of course, never dreamt that it would be so popular, or else they would have taken a larger and more commodious room.

I cannot say I was dazzled by the galaxy of beauty presented to my gaze; indeed it is impossible to suppose for a moment that any

one of the artists represented ever seriously intended the work here exhibited to be taken as his ideal of feminine beauty. There is hardly one of the faces that deserves to be termed beautiful. They do not rise above prettiness, and there is a singular absence of spirituality and intellect in all of them. But, perhaps, artists generally are of Clive Newcome's opinion, that beautiful women ought to be stupid. 'Give me,' said that accomplished critic of womanhood, 'a calm woman, a slow woman, a lazy majestic woman. Show me a gracious virgin bearing a lily, not a leering giggler frisking a rattle. A lively woman would be the death of me. . . . About great beauty there should always reign a silence. . . . To be beautiful is enough. If a woman can do that, well; who shall demand more from her? You don't want a rose to sing? And I think wit is out of place when there is great beauty.' The exhibitors at the *Graphic* Gallery seem to be of Clive Newcome's opinion, an opinion with which I must admit that I do not wholly agree. The three most pleasing faces, to my mind, are those of Mr. Leslie, Mr. Storey, and Mr. Perugini, which stand side by side. They differ widely, but each of them is fair enough and sweet enough to steal a man's heart from him. Mr. Alma Tadema with proper marital chivalry has chosen his wife as his ideal; but I have seen that handsome lady to much better advantage in some of Mr. Tadema's other pictures, notably 'The Sculpture Gallery.' Mr. Long gives us a solemn sensuous Egyptian beauty, of the type that Clive Newcome would have admired. The flesh-tints are finely painted, and as a work of art this seems to me the best of the group; but, owing to the smallness of the room, one is

forced to view it at too short a distance to allow of its due effect being realised. Mr. Tissot's beauty is a very lively young lady, a charming companion I am sure, though her nose is 'tip-tilted like the petal of a flower,' and the lines of her mouth are most perversely irregular. For my own part, I would rather cast in my lot with the owner of that arch smile and those merry eyes and that coquettish mouth than with Mr. Dicksee's sage-green damsel with manifest yearnings after 'the higher life,' or Mr. Hopkins's *mulier dolorosa* with the 'lidded eyes,' who looks as if she had just been indulging in that truly feminine luxury, 'a good cry,' or Mr. Calderon's perky young woman in *déshabillé*; or Mr. Marcus Stone's lackadaisical seaside *belle*; or Sir Frederick Leighton's skimpy and attenuated blonde. But the gem of the exhibition is Mr. Millais's 'Cherry Ripe.' I lost my heart straightway to that little maiden of seven, than whom, I make bold to say, the artist has given us no more beautiful and charming child-study.

The Dramatic Fine Art Gallery is not, on its merits, a very noteworthy exhibition, though the *Athenæum* is hardly fair in terming it 'a chaos of indescribable rubbish;' but it has an interest, apart from its artistic phases, which will doubtless attract to it many visitors. The exhibition is confined to portraits of actors and paintings by actors. For the most part the works contributed are the fruit of the leisure hours of actors and actresses, who have a taste for pictorial art, and have cultivated that taste with praiseworthy assiduity. There are, of course, the marks of amateurishness everywhere in the collection; but it is evident that these ama-

teurs have pursued their pastime with far more vigour and enthusiasm, with far more careful study and conscientious attention to detail, than most amateur dabblers in painting. Some of the smaller and less ambitious contributions are really clever. In the larger and more pretentious canvases the defects are of course more glaring; but even here there are pictures which would pass muster at an ordinary Royal Academy Exhibition. I have seen specimens of art from the brushes of professional artists at Burlington House that fell considerably short of the standard of excellence attained by, for example, Mr. George Giddens, Mr. Forbes Robertson, and Mr. F. C. Ellesman. Nor is the 'fair sect,' as one of Mr. Andrew Halliday's characters in *Checkmate* used to term that portion of humanity, unrepresented; indeed, what department of art is there in which women are not represented in our days? Mrs. Keeley, Madame Ronniger, Miss Geneviève Ward, Mrs. Wellsbourne, and Miss Ella Dietz, all prove themselves possessed of a decided talent for drawing, and a graceful taste which has evidently been assiduously cultivated.

The Dramatic Fine Art Gallery is an interesting experiment; but I cannot say that I should wish to see it repeated. It is rather an appalling prospect to look forward to, if the amateur painters in all professions should follow the example of the ladies and gentlemen of the stage—if barristers, soldiers, sailors, bankers, and even tradesmen should suddenly be seized with an insatiate craving for exhibiting *their* crude efforts at colouring canvas. Yet why should they not? In every profession there are amateur artists, whose

pictures would, in all probability, make quite as good a show as those of actors and actresses. I have gazed with mingled wonder and admiration at the pictorial achievements of that eminent member of the prize-ring, Jem Ward, and have been deeply interested in watching the ex-Champion of England plying the brush so deftly with those terrible 'mawleys' which had pounded into jelly the hard 'mugs' of the very best bruisers that the three kingdoms could bring against him. In looking at such productions it is not their merit as works of art that attracts our attention; but the fact that they have been produced under peculiar circumstances, and by persons whose training has been in very different pursuits. If you saw a monkey playing on the fiddle, you would not criticise the quality of the music, but be lost in wonder and admiration at the thought that the creature should be able to perform at all. These extraneous and meretricious attractions, however, are distinctly injurious to art. A picture should be judged on its merits as a picture, and on no other grounds. I sincerely hope, therefore, in the interests of art, that we shall not be flooded with exhibitions of amateur work. It is no doubt pleasant to find that, in an age when desperately hard labour is an essential of most ordinary men's existence, there should be found so many persons who devote their leisure to coqueting, more or less seriously, with the fine arts. But it is not fair that these *dilettante* students should exhibit their works cheek by jowl with the shows of professional artists, wheedle the public out of its shillings, and then claim, on the ground of being amateurs, to be exempt from the criticism dealt out to the genuine

workers in art. If the amateur is to escape from stern and rigid criticism, he must confine his displays to the private circle of his friends and acquaintances; when he steps out of that circle and courts publicity, he must be prepared to take the consequences, and abide judgment strictly on his merits. That is the only way of checking the presumption and conceit which are too prominent features in the amateurs of the present day.

Those painted beauties, of whom I have just spoken, recall to me a *bon mot* made not long since by a well-known Q.C. and *Quarterly Reviewer* who is renowned for his atrabilious sarcasm. I will call him Mr. Wenham—Thackeray's. Mr. Wenham is the standing representative of the type of man I mean. Mr. Wenham, then, met at a ball an elderly lady remarkable for her bluntness and asperity, whom I will call (after Thackeray again) Lady Kew. 'What do you think of my daughter to-night, Mr. Wenham?' asked her ladyship. 'Don't you think she looks well?' 'Really, Lady Kew,' said the satirist, with a sour smile, 'I am not competent to pronounce an opinion. I do not profess to be a judge of *painting*; but I have no doubt competent critics will pronounce her an angel.' 'And pray, Mr. Wenham, have you ever seen an angel that was not painted? If not, *you* at least are never likely to see one.'

Mr. Wenham had the worst of that encounter of wits, I think; but he was happier on a subsequent and very recent occasion. Asked by a well-known member of the 'shrieking sisterhood' what he thought of an article by one of the 'sisters' on 'Woman's Rights,' 'Ah,' said he drily, 'you should

not ask me. You know I have always maintained that women look better in muslin than in *print*.'

I gave an instance in a previous note of the extraordinary ignorance of English manners and customs prevalent in France. But even our American cousins do not appear to have very clear notions of our habits of life. I took up a volume of the *Atlantic Monthly*, for 1879, the other day, and there I found an article upon English society the statements in which made my hair stand on end. I read with horror, for example, that flogging is the most dearly cherished privilege among parents, even mothers, of the John Bull class. My blood froze in my veins as I further read that our girls, even our marriageable girls, are regularly flogged; that the riding-whip and the birch are articles of domestic economy, without which the household would be incomplete. Then followed a description of a peer flogging his niece with his hunting-whip under circumstances of such brutality and indecency that I dare not repeat them. If a magazine of such standing as the *Atlantic Monthly* condescends to print such outrageous libels upon English society, I suppose there must be American men and women who read the rubbish, and even believe it to be true. To show how trustworthy the writer is, and how thoroughly *au fait* he is with the manners and customs of that high life in England which he undertakes to describe, I will quote the following amusing passage: 'An American lady was visiting at a great house, where she noticed that the napkin was not used at luncheon. Being well known to her hostess, she ventured to ask her the reason. Her grace—for she was a duchess

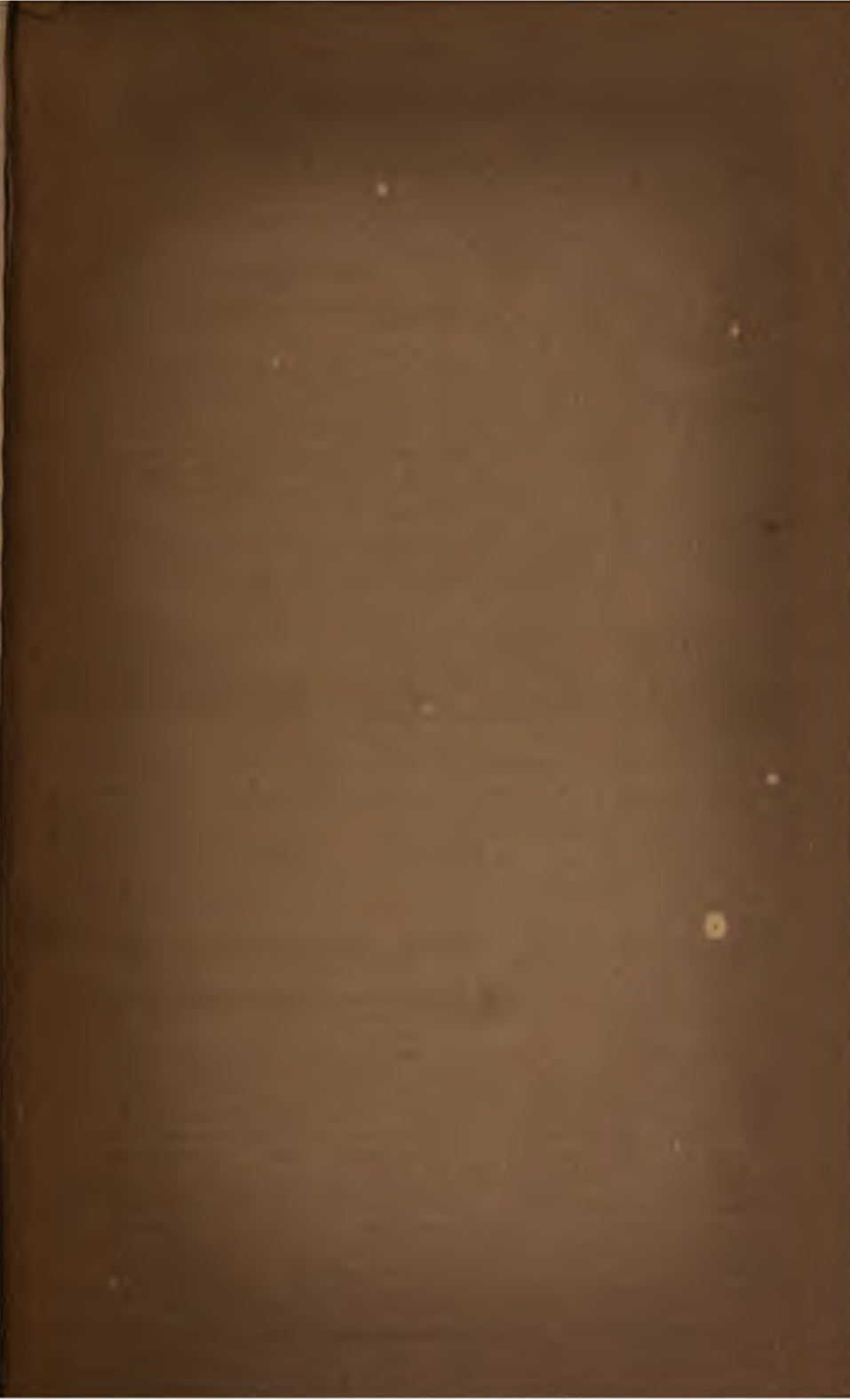
—replied that it was ‘not the custom;’ the explanation being given, moreover, ‘with an air which signified that that settled the question.’ It happened, however, unfortunately for the duchess, that her guest had taken lunch with the Queen more than once at Balmoral, where she found that napkins were not without the countenance of Royalty. This information accordingly was imparted to the duchess, who thereupon exclaimed, ‘Indeed! The Queen had better be careful; she will make herself unpopular if she undertakes to change the customs of the country.’

En revanche, let me give an anecdote quite as illustrative of American manners as the foregoing is of English manners. A friend of mine was introduced the other day to a very charming young American lady at Geneva. With that *naïveté* and frankness characteristic of Yankee woman-kind, she soon informed him that she was spending her honeymoon in Europe. ‘That must be very delightful,’ exclaimed my friend. ‘Yes,’ was her reply; ‘I enjoy it immensely.’ Then it occurred to him that he had seen nothing of the lady’s husband. ‘Your husband is not here to-day, then?’ he added. He says he shall not easily forget the comical expression of amusement and surprise upon her face as she answered, with a merry laugh, ‘My husband here! Why, he is not with me! I left him in New York.’ This idea of a honeymoon is unique. I wonder if the husband was enjoying his honeymoon with equal zest on the other side of the Atlantic? Perhaps he was.

Mr. R. B. Marston (Messrs. Sampson Low & Co.) has registered a ‘happy thought’ in the form of ‘The Popular Paper Knife,’ a very useful and curious shilling’s-worth. You can cut your book or magazine with it; and on the blade, in small but clear characters, you find marked inches, centimètres, and quite an abstract of the *Post Office Guide*. Altogether it is a very handy desk companion.

A good many people drink too much, and a good many others, the doctors tell us, eat too much, particularly of animal food. In the Farringdon-road, opposite the Metropolitan Railway-station, an experiment is being tried which deserves to meet with success and to have a more central position. It is ‘The Food of Health’ Restaurant, a vegetarian establishment, where you can get soups at threepence, and ‘savouries’ at fourpence, per portion, as well as pleasant preparations of fruit on the same moderate scale. Good coffee and tea are supplied, but no intoxicants. This is another step in the wholesome dietetic non-alcoholic movement, which gains ground in London. Without discussing the vegetarian question pure and simple, there can be no doubt that a light, nourishing, well-cooked, and economical luncheon of this kind, with a cup of thoroughly good coffee, is a boon to any class. To partake hurriedly of animal food in the midst of a day of severe business strain spoils many a man’s temper, induces unhealthy lethargy, and diminishes the power for real work.

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"Then the woman ran, and beside the clear swift river she beheld her horse pacing up and down just like a steamer on the shore."

LONDON SOCIETY.

MAY 1880.

FORTUNES MADE IN BUSINESS.

XVII.

THE FORTUNES OF THE GLADSTONE FAMILY.

THE name of Gladstone, now so palpably and preëminently written in our political annals, was half a century ago known only as a name of potency and influence in the world of commerce. In 1832, when Mr. W. E. Gladstone, not then twenty-three years of age, presented himself as a parliamentary candidate before the electors of Newark, people asked wonderingly, 'Who is Mr. Gladstone?' At Newark they had not even the advantage of knowing that the name of Gladstone stood high on the Liverpool 'Change; and when a journalist of the day explained that the youthful candidate was the son of a great Liverpool merchant, 'the friend of Canning,' the voters of this comfortable pocket borough of the Duke of Newcastle's were no doubt grateful for the information. Since that time, the name has become familiar in the mouths of men; and a long and remarkable political career has added to it a lustre and significance which could never have been dreamed of by the shrewd and plodding man of business who, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, settled at Liverpool, and there embarked in those commercial undertakings by which he ultimately made his fortune. It was the circumstance

of John Gladstone having become opulent by business which made it possible for his son to enter upon that course of study and cultivation, and placed him upon that social plane, which enabled him, by the exercise of his great natural gifts, to achieve the highest position which an Englishman can attain. Mr. Gladstone owes his start in life to business; and it is not at all improbable that, had his father been less successful, the man who was destined to employ his genius and energy in managing the affairs of the nation might have found himself altogether absorbed in commercial pursuits, with no higher ambition than the honourable one of becoming a merchant prince. Mr. Gladstone has never attempted to sever the link between his original trade-surroundings and his subsequent political life, and, while devoting himself with all the ardour of his being to the latter, has always been ready to acknowledge his obligations to the former. 'I know not,' said Mr. Gladstone at Liverpool in 1872, 'why commerce in England should not have its old families, rejoicing to be connected with commerce from generation to generation. It has been so in other countries; I trust it will be so in this country.'

I think it is a subject of sorrow, and almost of scandal, when those families who have either acquired or recovered station and wealth through commerce turn their backs upon it, and seem to be ashamed of it. It certainly is not so with my brother or with me. His sons are treading in his steps, and one of my sons, I rejoice to say, is treading in the steps of my father and my brother.'

It is not too much to say that the men of whom England has the greatest cause to be proud—the men who have done most to elevate her, morally, materially, and politically—have, in the majority of instances, risen from the ranks of trade and commerce; and in Mr. Gladstone we have not only a representative of the highest type of English statesman, but a representative of those traditions and rewards which a prosperous and active business community like ours has always been able to look up to and to cherish. Few families, however lofty their lineage, however aristocratic their present *entourage*, but in the backward glance down the vistas of the past can descry some high commercial landmark by which their ancestors found their way to fortune and to title. In some cases the landmark lies more remotely in the retrospect than in others, that is all; but it often happens that the nearer the connection between the commercial existence and the non-commercial existence, the greater the strength and individuality there is in the person inheriting so favourable a position. In this article the intention is to show how the Gladstones made their way from comparatively humble business beginnings to wealth, rank, and fame; and how in natural sequence the commercial life gradually merged in the political, the one strength-

ening the other, until to-day the name of Gladstone is regarded almost solely in its political import.

The Gladstones are a Scotch family, and can be traced back to the Gladstones of Biggar in Lanarkshire, who flourished early in the sixteenth century. There was a William Gladstones, who carried on the business of a maltster at Biggar down to the year 1728, when he died, leaving three sons and a daughter. His son John, born in 1693 or 1694, succeeded to his business, and extended it considerably. John died in 1736. 'This John Gladstones,' says Mr. G. Barnett Smith, 'had a large family, consisting of five sons and six daughters. The third son, John, took the patrimony of Mid Toftcombs, and, marrying, received with his wife, Christian Taverner, a dowry amounting to seven thousand merks—a not inconsiderable sum at that period. The fourth son of this marriage was Thomas Gladstone—grandfather of the statesman—who was born at Mid Toftcombs on the 3d of June 1732, and lived until the year of William Ewart Gladstone's birth, dying at the ripe age of seventy-seven. Thomas Gladstone, having early left the parental roof, became a corn-merchant in Leith, and married Helen, the daughter of Walter Neilson of Springfield. Their union was very prolific, and of sixteen children born to them no fewer than twelve grew up to maturity. Thomas Gladstone's aptitude for business was so great, and he was so enterprising, that, notwithstanding the numerous claims upon him, he was able to make some provision for all his sons in the adoption of their various trades or callings.'

John Gladstone (Mr. W. E. Gladstone's father) was Thomas

Gladstone's eldest son, and was born at Leith in 1763. After receiving a fair education, he joined his father in business, and showed so much talent and activity that he was soon intrusted with the execution of important commissions. Thomas Gladstone was a large importer of grain, and on a certain occasion, having a cargo of grain arriving in Liverpool, he sent his son John to receive and endeavour to effect a sale of it. John Gladstone succeeded in doing this to his father's entire satisfaction, and in the negotiations connected therewith was brought into contact with the principal partner in the firm of Corrie & Co., corn-merchants. Mr. Corrie was so favourably impressed with young Gladstone's business aptitude and intelligence, that he wrote to the father, and begged to be allowed to retain his son as assistant in the house of Corrie & Co. John Gladstone himself, impressed by the magnitude and importance of Liverpool as a commercial centre, added his own entreaties to those of Mr. Corrie; and his father, who had other sons growing up capable of rendering him aid in his own business at Leith, consented to the proposal. It thus came about that, in the year 1784, John Gladstone settled himself down to that commercial career which, as the years went on, raised him to fortune and eminence.

Liverpool was at this period doing a vast and rapidly increasing trade, and, to a young man of tact and energy like John Gladstone, it afforded the best possible field for enterprise and speculation. The port on the Mersey had now entered upon the third stage of its development. During the early years of the eighteenth century Liverpool had enriched itself to a mighty extent by the importation

of tobacco. In the ten years from 1700 to 1709 not less than 12,880 tons of the American weed were annually imported into Great Britain, 7857 tons being reshipped to other countries, leaving 5023 tons for home consumption. Liverpool was chiefly responsible for this importation of tobacco, half the shipping and more than half the wealth of the port being given up to the traffic. From 1700 to 1752 the tobacco trade was the great source of Liverpool's prosperity, and in that period the population increased from 5715 to 18,500. The second stage of Liverpool's commercial development dated from about the middle of the eighteenth century down to the year 1807, during which time it achieved the questionable eminence of being more largely engaged in the slave-trade than any other place in the world. This inhuman traffic was at its height when John Gladstone entered the house of Corrie & Co., and in the agitation which subsequently ensued for its abolition he must have been deeply concerned. The first slave-ship—a small vessel of thirty tons—was sent from Liverpool in 1709; and so remunerative did that venture prove, that by 1753 there were no fewer than eighty-eight Liverpool ships engaged in the slave-trade. From 1795 to 1804, the Liverpool merchants were the means of shipping 323,770 slaves from Africa to America and the West Indies; and so it came about that nearly every one in the town was directly or indirectly engaged in the slave-traffic. John Gladstone himself, as an owner of slaves, became in a way connected with this unhappy branch of commerce, and, like many more merchants of reputed probity and honesty, was able to satisfy his conscience by arguing it to be a necessity;

and there is no doubt that in the subsequent agitation for the abolition of the slave-trade he was not altogether in sympathy with Clarkson, Roscoe, Wilberforce, and the statesman whom he most delighted to honour—Canning. It was during the later and more legitimate period of Liverpool's trading, however, that John Gladstone obtained his greatest measure of success. The slave-trade was put an end to in 1804; and thenceforward it was by following more honourable courses that Liverpool achieved the prosperity which ultimately made it the first shipping port in the world. Fresh channels of enterprise opened up as others closed; and John Gladstone, as we shall see, played an important part in the advancement of Liverpool in the early years of the present century.

Corrie & Co. showed their appreciation of the services of the young Scotsman by making him a partner after a time; and the firm of Corrie, Gladstone, & Bradshaw soon extended its operations, and became one of the most active and prosperous firms in the trade. Mr. Smith, in his *Life of W. E. Gladstone*, relates an anecdote in connection with John Gladstone's business sagacity at this period. 'The utter failure of the European corn-crops,' says Mr. Smith, 'was regarded as an excellent opportunity for doing a great stroke of business by Mr. Corrie, who sent Mr. Gladstone to the United States to buy grain. But America, too, had suffered in her crops, and no corn was to be had. While in a condition of great perplexity, Mr. Gladstone received advices from Liverpool to the effect that twenty-four vessels had been engaged to convey to Europe the grain he was despatched to purchase, but which he had not been successful in pro-

curing. The disastrous news soon became known that there were no cargoes of grain, and that the vessels, instead of being loaded with a rich freight, must return to Liverpool in ballast only. The prospect was ruinous, and the stability of the house of Corrie & Co. was considered irretrievably shattered. But Liverpool merchants had reckoned without their host. Now was the time for John Gladstone to demonstrate his business capacity and enterprise, by which he was able to save the fortunes of the firm. While many would have been helplessly casting about for means of recovery, young Gladstone was up and doing. The ships must not return empty. He made a thorough examination of the American markets, ascertained what stocks there were which would be likely to prove acceptable in Liverpool, and, by dint of sleepless energy and activity, he managed to stock the holds of all the vessels. The result was that the house was saved at a very trifling loss.'

This transaction revealed fresh possibilities of commercial success to John Gladstone, and from that time the firm's speculations were by no means confined to the importing and selling of grain. They soon launched into business as general merchants and importers, and were fortunate enough to be appointed Government agents at Liverpool. For sixteen years the partnership between Messrs. Corrie, Gladstone, & Bradshaw continued unbroken; but at the end of that time a dissolution took place, by which Mr. John Gladstone was left sole proprietor of the concern. Mr. Gladstone was still a comparatively young man, and full of energy and business capacity; so, instead of confining his operations within narrower

limits now that he was left to himself, he felt more free than ever to extend his undertakings. He first took his brother Robert into partnership; and subsequently other brothers came and settled in Liverpool, until in the end all the seven sons of Thomas Gladstone were drafted away from Leith to the rising Lancashire seaport. The firm of Gladstone & Co. soon became very extensively engaged in the West India trade, Mr. John Gladstone himself making large purchases of estates in Demerara and elsewhere in the Indies. The sugar and other produce which he sold on the Liverpool Exchange were grown on his own plantations and imported in his own ships, and he rapidly amassed a fortune in this branch of commerce. He was, of course, a large slave-owner; and the first speech that Mr. W. E. Gladstone made in the House of Commons was in defence of his father, whose estates in the West Indies had been expressly referred to in the Emancipation debate by Lord Howick, the imputation being that the slaves on the plantations of Mr. Gladstone and other West Indian proprietors were inhumanly treated. There is every reason to believe, however, from evidence which was adduced at that time, that the slaves on Mr. Gladstone's estates were well kept and treated with every kindness and consideration; indeed, so well were Mr. Gladstone's West Indian estates ordered and superintended, that slavery as it existed on his plantations did not seem the horrible thing that the abolitionists made it out to be. Sudden emancipation, the Gladstones argued, would utterly demoralise the negroes, severing that protecting link which was necessary to keep them together; first educate them to thrifty and industrious habits,

they said, and then let them be emancipated by all means. The Gladstone theory of emancipation was conscientiously held by a large number of people at that time, and in advocating such theory they considered themselves in sympathy with, rather than in opposition to, the abolitionists.

John Gladstone & Co. opened up trade connections with all parts of the world. They had ships constantly plying between Liverpool and Russia, with which country they did a very large business. In course of time they also were enabled to extend their operations to India and China, their firm being the first to send out a private vessel to Calcutta after the extension of the East India and China trades, beyond the limits of the East India Company's monopoly. All this time Mr. John Gladstone was not neglecting his interests in Liverpool; but while his trade with foreign nations increased, he contrived to make many valuable investments in land and house property, all of which proved very fortunate speculations. He thus became the possessor of property in Liverpool, Seaforth, and elsewhere, which in course of time doubled and trebled itself in value. He also purchased the advowsons of St. Andrew's Church, Renshaw-street, Liverpool, and Seaforth Church, of which the Gladstone family still remain the patrons.

The energy and ability of Mr. John Gladstone found a still further outlet in the excitement of political life. His commercial interests first forced him into the arena of politics; but once having got there, he became so imbued with party feeling, that he was never able wholly to disentangle himself from political associations. The years 1806 and 1807 were

years of great depression for Liverpool merchants. The decrees of Napoleon and the counter-decrees of the British Government, in regard to vessels trading with foreign ports, were most harassing to traders; and when to these were added the complications consequent upon the disputes with America, a state of commercial stagnation ensued which was most disastrous. A petition to Parliament was got up on the subject, praying for an alteration of the Orders in Council, and John Gladstone & Co. were amongst the most influential signatories on that occasion. It was not until 1812, however, that the Orders were withdrawn, and by that time England was at war with the United States. In this year, on the retirement of William Roscoe from the representation of Liverpool, Mr. John Gladstone brought forward Mr. Canning's name, and through his interest the celebrated Tory statesman was adopted as a candidate. The other candidates were Henry Brougham, General Gascoyne, and Mr. Creevey, and between Canning and Brougham Mr. Gladstone strove hard to effect an alliance. In this he was unsuccessful, there being but little sympathy between the future Tory Premier and the future Whig Lord Chancellor, although years afterwards, during the brief period that Canning held the reins of Government (in 1827), Brougham gave his old opponent his support. Failing in his efforts to get Canning and Brougham to run together, Mr. Gladstone took up the local Tory candidate, General Gascoyne, in conjunction with Canning (the expenses of whose election he defrayed out of his own pocket); and the result was that Canning and Gascoyne were returned by a large majority. Brougham was now excluded from Parliament for four years; and

when in 1816 he was returned for Winchelsea, he made his appearance in the House as the declared enemy of Canning. One of the most memorable scenes that ever occurred in the House took place between Brougham and Canning in this year. In the debate on Catholic Emancipation, Brougham charged Canning with having been 'guilty of the most monstrous truckling for office that the whole history of political tergiversation could present;' and Canning, losing all self-control, started to his feet, and cried, 'It is false!' Still, as we have pointed out, these two eminent statesmen subsequently reconciled their differences and coöperated in political action.

Great as was the interest taken in Liverpool affairs by Mr. John Gladstone, he always refused to allow himself to be elected a member of the municipal corporation, although there is no doubt he would have been an acceptable mayor, and would have discharged the duties of the office with distinction. His sympathy was not much enlisted in municipal matters, although in every movement that had for its object the direct advancement of Liverpool's prosperity he was an active participator. It was through his exertions that a clause was introduced into the Steamboat Act requiring every vessel to carry a number of boats proportionate to the number of passengers, a provision which has been the means of saving thousands of lives. It is recorded also that John Gladstone was one of the principal speakers at a meeting held in the Liverpool Town Hall, on the 14th of February 1824, for the purpose of considering the best means of assisting the Greeks in their struggle for independence. On many public occasions Mr. Gladstone came forward as a speaker,

and, without being possessed of particular eloquence, he had a manly straightforward way of expressing his sentiments, which always caused him to be listened to with attention and respect. Mr. Gladstone remained the faithful friend of Canning to the last; and when in 1822 Canning took his farewell of Liverpool, Mr. Gladstone presided at the dinner given in his honour, and it was at Mr. Gladstone's house that an address was formally presented to the retiring member. When Canning, five years later, succeeded Lord Liverpool as Prime Minister, Mr. Gladstone moved an address of congratulation to the King. Canning's name was perpetuated in Liverpool in many ways, and in a great measure owing to the exertions of Mr. Gladstone. The Liverpool Canning Club was an outcome of this hero-worship; so were the Canning Docks, and many other public erections. How greatly Mr. Gladstone's attitude on important questions, and his untiring efforts for the promotion of the prosperity of Liverpool, were appreciated, is sufficiently evidenced by the fact that, on the 18th of October 1824, his 'fellow-townsmen and friends' presented him with a service of plate, 'to mark their high sense of his successful exertions for the promotion of trade and commerce, and in acknowledgment of his most important services rendered to the town of Liverpool.'

By this time Mr. John Gladstone, rich in worldly possessions, owning the friendship of a Minister of State, and standing high in the esteem of the world of commerce and his own political party, was prompted to court parliamentary honours, and, mainly through the influence of the Marlborough family, obtained a seat in the House of Commons as the repre-

sentative of Woodstock. He afterwards sat for Lancaster, and was in the House altogether about nine years, remaining a member long enough to sit on the same benches as his son. It must have been with peculiar feelings Mr. John Gladstone listened to that son's first speech, to which we have already alluded, full as it was of personal references. It was insinuated that the head of the house of Gladstone & Co. had made his enormous wealth by slave-driving, and many stories were concocted of alleged inhumanities practised on their West Indian plantations. When Mr. W. E. Gladstone was put in nomination for Newark he was publicly asked what he thought of the passage in Exodus xxi. 16: 'He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death;' and whether his father was not a dealer in human flesh. He had also been asked to expound his views upon the subject of negro slavery generally. One of the public journals had told the people that Mr. Gladstone was 'the son of Gladstone of Liverpool, a person who had amassed a large fortune by West India dealings. In other words, a great part of his gold has sprung from the blood of black slaves.' All this, as one can well imagine, was calculated to place the Gladstones in bad odour at a time when the country was agitated with the question of the emancipation of slaves in our colonies; but the Gladstones, father and son, valiantly took their stand side by side as opponents of immediate emancipation. The son had told the electors of Newark that he desired the emancipation of slaves upon such terms as would preserve them and the colonies from destruction; he had told them that he earnestly

trusted, without risk of blood, without violation of property, with unimpaired benefit to the negro, and with the utmost speed which prudence would admit, they would arrive at that exceedingly desirable consummation, the utter extinction of slavery; and he now repeated this, and more, to the House of Commons, when provoked thereto by the pointed allusions of Lord Howick, and moved by strong feelings of filial duty. Lord Howick had referred—we quote the words of Mr. Barnett Smith—to an estate in Demerara owned by Mr. Gladstone's father, 'for the purpose of showing that a great destruction of human life had taken place in the West Indies, owing to the manner in which the slaves were worked. It was in reply to this accusation that Mr. Gladstone delivered his maiden speech on the 17th of May [1833], the occasion being the presentation of a petition from Portarlington for the abolition of slavery. He challenged the noble lord's statement respecting the decrease of seventy-one slaves upon the estate of Vreeden Hoop, which had been attributed to the increased cultivation of sugar. The real cause of the decrease lay in the very large proportion of Africans upon the estate. When it came into his father's possession, it was so weak, owing to the great number of Africans upon it, that he was obliged to add two hundred people to the gang. It was notorious that Africans were imported into Demerara and Trinidad up to a later period than into any other colony; and he should, when the proper time arrived, be able to prove that the decrease on Vreeden Hoop was among the old Africans, and that there was an increase going on in the Creole population, which would be a

sufficient answer to the noble lord. The quantity of sugar produced was small in proportion to that produced on many other estates. The cultivation of cotton in Demerara had been abandoned, and that of coffee much diminished, and the people employed in these sources of production had been transferred to the cultivation of sugar. Demerara, too, was peculiarly circumstanced, and the labour of the same number of negroes, distributed over the year, would produce in that colony a given quantity of sugar, with less injury to the people, than negroes could produce in other colonies, working only at the stated periods of crop. He was ready to admit that this cultivation was of a more severe character than others; and he would ask, were there not certain employments in this and other countries more destructive to life than others? He would only instance those of painting and working in lead-mines, both of which were well known to have that tendency. The noble lord attempted to impugn the character of the gentleman acting as manager of his father's estates; and in making this selection he had certainly been most unfortunate, for there was not an individual in the colony more proverbial for humanity and the kind treatment of his slaves than Mr. Maclean. Mr. Gladstone, in concluding this warm defence of his relative, said he held in his hand two letters from the agent, in which that gentleman spoke in the kindest terms of the people under his charge, described their state of happiness, content, and healthiness—their good conduct, and the infrequency of severe punishment—and recommended certain additional comforts, which he said the slaves well deserved.'

The picture that Mr. W. E.

Gladstone drew in this first parliamentary speech is valuable for the light it throws upon the condition of things on his father's West Indian estates at this period. On several subsequent occasions Mr. Gladstone's voice was heard in the House in defence of the West Indian planters; his great contention was that if the negroes were not prepared by moral instruction to enjoy their freedom in a rational and healthful manner, liberty would prove a curse, instead of a blessing, to them. It was in vain, however, to attempt to stem the tide of emancipation any longer; both Parliament and the country had determined that colonial slavery should cease to exist; and accordingly the measure passed, and Mr. John Gladstone would be one of the recipients of the 20,000,000*l.* compensation which by the Act was voted to the slave-owners.

Mr. John Gladstone was chairman of the West India Association during the greater period of the Emancipation agitation, and advocated the cause of the planters with much courage. He was the author of a pamphlet 'On the Present State of Slavery in the British West Indies and in the United States of America; and on the Importation of Sugar from the British Settlements in India,' also of a subsequent pamphlet containing 'A Statement of Facts connected with the Present State of Slavery in the British Sugar and Coffee Colonies and in the United States of America; together with a View of the Situation of the Lower Classes in the United Kingdom: in a Letter addressed to Sir Robert Peel,' published in 1830. He was greatly respected by the Tory party generally, and, after the death of Canning, contracted a friendship with Sir Robert Peel.

On commercial matters he was frequently consulted by the Governments of the day, and as a member of committees dealing with trade questions his assistance was invaluable. Although a fluent and able speaker at public meetings, he did not aspire to take rank amongst parliamentary speakers; but was content to serve his party by his consistent and unswerving vote. In 1845 Sir Robert Peel conferred a baronetcy upon him, an honour which he had well deserved, both for his political fidelity and as a reward for his great public services as one of the chief commercial men of his time.

Sir John Gladstone was twice married. By his first marriage there was no issue; but by his second wife, Ann Robertson, daughter of Mr. Andrew Robertson of Stornoway, he had four sons and two daughters—the present Sir Thomas Gladstone, Bart., of Fasque; William Ewart Gladstone, the distinguished statesman; John Neilson Gladstone, who was a captain in the army and M.P. for Portarlington, and died in 1863; Robertson Gladstone, the only son who evinced a desire for commercial life, and succeeded to his father's business; Ann McKenzie Gladstone and Helen Jane Gladstone, both of whom are now dead. Sir John Gladstone lived to the venerable age of eighty-eight, dying in 1851, full of years and honours. He lived to see his son achieve a prominent position as a statesman, saw him fill some of the highest offices of State, and, what would probably be more wonderful than all to the aged baronet, witnessed his gradual but decided breaking away from the principles of his youth and early manhood—the principles which he had held so tenaciously at the beginning of

his parliamentary career, and by which he had first risen to notice.

SIR THOMAS GLADSTONE, BART.

Sir John Gladstone's eldest son, Thomas, was born at Liverpool on the 25th of July 1804. From his boyhood he was in a position, like his more distinguished brother, to hold himself aloof from the cares and responsibilities attaching to a business life. He may be said, indeed, to have been born to the purple; for although in his youth he must have heard much of trade fluctuations, and the going-out and coming-in of ships in which his father's fortune was more or less embarked, he had at his command from the first all the advantage which money could give. He was educated at Eton, and subsequently went to Christ Church, Oxford, where he took his B.A. degree in 1827, and his M.A. degree in 1830. At Oxford, Thomas Gladstone naturally had for associates many men who afterwards achieved celebrity, and his intelligence and force of character caused him to be a general favourite amongst them. Nursed in Tory principles, and sharing all his father's admiration for Canning, he held unswervingly to the Tory faith through all political mutations; and while the lines of party have in these later times drawn closer together, he has moved but little from the original point of demarcation by which he took his stand in 1827. Thus it has happened that while Mr. W. E. Gladstone has been advocating the Liberal theories which he has seen fit to adopt in his more mature years, Thomas Gladstone has been conspicuous for the warmth with which he has denounced such theories. Thomas Gladstone had been a member of the House of Commons two years

when his brother, as the nominee of the Duke of Newcastle, obtained a seat as the Conservative representative of the electors of Newark. Thomas Gladstone was returned for the now decayed borough of Queenborough in Kent, which, with a parish comprising not more than about five hundred acres, and a population of considerably under a thousand, was privileged to send two members to Parliament until the Reform Bill put an end to such an anomalous condition of things. He was one of the last members that Queenborough returned to the House of Commons, having been elected in 1830. In 1832 he was returned for the Irish constituency of Portarlington, and sat for that place until 1835, when he again transferred his services to an English borough, this time being returned for the important town of Leicester, which he represented for two years. From 1837 to 1842 he was without a seat in the House, but in the last-named year was fortunate enough to get returned for Ipswich. This was the last constituency for which he sat; and from the time of his succeeding to the baronetcy in 1851 he has contented himself with living the life of a country gentleman, attending to his extensive estates, and fulfilling such public duties as have naturally fallen to him in his position of landed proprietor. In 1853 the degree of D.C.L. was conferred upon him. He is Lord-Lieutenant of Kincardineshire, and was for a time Lieutenant of the Kincardine Rifles. He married Miss Louisa Fellowes, daughter of Mr. Robert Fellowes of Shottisham Park, Norfolk, in 1835, by whom he has a son—John Robert, born in 1852, and now a lieutenant in the Coldstream Guards—and three daughters. The estate which he

inherited from his father at Fasque, near Laurencekirk, Kincardineshire, is his principal seat; in addition to which he has another Scottish seat, Glendye Lodge, Banchory. Sir Thomas Gladstone, now in the seventy-sixth year of his age, takes a vigorous interest in public affairs, and is much respected by his tenants and neighbours.

THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE.

When William Ewart Gladstone first saw the light in Rodney-street, Liverpool, on the 29th of December 1809, a deep shadow rested upon the commercial atmosphere, and Liverpool merchants were suffering severely from the restrictions which war had placed upon their intercourse by sea with other nations. Had Liverpool continued in the decline which had then strongly set in, there is no doubt the fortunes of Mr. John Gladstone would have been seriously impaired, and his son's career might have been very different from what it has proved to be, though it is certain he would have won distinction, no matter into what channel his talent and activity had been diverted. But, largely owing to the determined action of John Gladstone, relief was afforded to Liverpool; and when the anxieties and dangers of war had been tided over, increased prosperity followed, and the head of the firm of John Gladstone & Co. was enabled to realise his most sanguine hopes in the training and placing in life of his sons. It was natural that young Gladstone should have imbibed a strong predilection for politics, situated as he was, his father being one of Liverpool's chief political champions, and making his house a sort of rendezvous for the leaders of his party. It was

from the balcony of Mr. Gladstone's house that Canning addressed the people after having been elected for Liverpool in 1812. In almost every public movement of importance in Liverpool Mr. John Gladstone made himself prominent; and so thoroughly and earnestly did he concern himself in the political action of the time, that the home-life of the family was deeply tinged with political thought and feeling. In his son, William Ewart, he always found a sympathetic listener, and before the boy had reached his teens father and son were in the habit of conversing together on public matters. The boyhood of the future statesman was thus passed in the midst of associations which were best calculated to bring about the true development of his special genius. Contact with things commercial engendered in him a taste for matters of finance, and contact with the exciting ebbs and flows of party warfare filled his young mind with political aspirations. But, notwithstanding that he gave his heart to the study of financial concerns as he grew to manhood, he is said to have been by no means a brilliant arithmetician in his more juvenile days, and on this head Dean Stanley not long ago chose to point an appropriate moral. 'There is a small school near Liverpool,' said the Dean, 'at which Mr. Gladstone was brought up before he went to Eton. A few years afterwards another little boy, who also went to this school, and whose name I will not mention, called upon the old clergyman who was the head-master. The boy was now a young man, and he said to the old clergyman, "There is one thing in which I have never in the least degree improved since I was at school—the casting up of figures." "Well," replied the

master, "it is very extraordinary that it should be so, because certainly no one could be a more incapable arithmetician at school than you were; but I will tell you a curious thing. When Mr. Gladstone was at the school he was just as incapable at addition and subtraction as you were; now you see what he has become. He is one of the greatest of our financiers." Archdeacon Jones was Mr. Gladstone's first schoolmaster.

In September 1821, Mr. Gladstone, then in his twelfth year, went to Eton, where for six years he devoted himself with more than ordinary assiduity to the work of the school, distinguishing himself chiefly by the poetic and other contributions he put forth in the *Eton Miscellany*, a magazine to which Arthur Henry Hallam, G. A. (afterwards Bishop Selwyn, F. H. (now Sir F. H.) Doyle, and others supplied articles.

On leaving Eton in 1827 he was placed under Dr. Turner, afterwards Bishop of Calcutta, with whom he continued two years; and in 1829, being then in his twenty-first year, he proceeded to Christ Church, Oxford, and in 1831 took the highest honours in the University,—a double first-class. During his short but brilliant University career his Tory proclivities were undoubtedly strengthened; for the traditions of the University were all in that direction, and the collegians with whom he was more intimately associated were for the most part both Tories and High Churchmen. In the debates of the Oxford Union, of which for a time he was president, he took a very prominent and active part. In this miniature parliament he found himself frequently engaged in eager contention with men

whom he afterwards had to debate with in the House of Commons. Lord Selborne, the Duke of Newcastle, the Duke of Abercorn, Mr. Sidney Herbert, and Mr. Lowe were contemporary with Mr. Gladstone in the Oxford Union. The great question of Reform, which then was at its height, found in Mr. Gladstone a strong opponent; and the last motion that he made as a member of the society was in opposition to a motion for the immediate emancipation of our slaves in the West Indies. Read in the light of later experience, it seems almost incredible that a mind of such a comprehensive grasp as Mr. Gladstone's should have been narrowed down and fettered by party leanings as his was at this period. He himself told us, not many months ago, that he did not learn, when at Oxford, that which he had learned since, viz. 'to set a due value on the imperishable and the inestimable principles of human liberty.' Bound to the Tory party by innumerable ties, having had Tory principles instilled into his mind with all the rigidity of high moral truths, it was not surprising that he took the stand he did in political matters, and only gave way to broader views as years and experience brought him increase of light and wisdom.

A brief period of continental travel followed his University career; and, returning to England in the early autumn of 1832, he found himself solicited by the Duke of Newcastle, the father of his intimate college friend, Lord Lincoln, to come forward in the Tory interest for Newark. The address which Mr. Gladstone issued to the electors on that occasion dealt mainly with the question of slavery, maintaining its abstract lawfulness, and, while objecting to immediate emancipa-

tion, as probably leading to bloodshed and internal war, advocating a gradual approach to the desired end by allowing the slaves to earn their freedom through honest and industrious habits. Serjeant Wilde and Mr. W. Farnworth Handley were his opponents; but he went manfully through the contest, and at the close of the poll the numbers were: Gladstone, 882; Handley, 793; Wilde, 719. Mr. Gladstone was thus returned to the first Reformed House of Parliament under Tory auspices, and almost from the first was regarded as a man of mark and distinction.

Mr. Gladstone's maiden speech was delivered, as we have already seen, in connection with the question of emancipation, and in defence of his father.

It was in 1833 that Southey wrote, with a touch of gloominess, of the great expectations which had been raised by 'young Gladstone, the member for Newark, who is said to be the ablest person that Oxford has sent forth for many years, since Peel or Canning,' and expressed a hope 'that the young man might not disappoint his friends.' In one sense young Gladstone did disappoint his friends: while they were clinging fondly to party traditions and rigidly keeping themselves within party boundaries, he was thinking out political problems for himself, and constantly coming upon new lights and revelations which led him far beyond the limits of Toryism. In another sense—the sense understood by Southey—he more than answered the most sanguine expectations of his friends; for while yet a young man he rose to eminence as an orator, a statesman, and a man of letters. By his speeches and writings he at once attracted the notice of the political and literary leaders of the day;

those of his own party hailed him as a powerful accession to their ranks, and those who numbered themselves amongst his opponents acknowledged him as a foeman worthy of their steel. Forty-seven years have now elapsed since Mr. Gladstone's voice was first heard within the walls of St. Stephen's; and looking back across those eventful years, and trying to realise what history will hereafter have to say of them, it is something of a marvel to find how large a space Mr. Gladstone fills in this chequered retrospect. In so many departments of public life has he been a prominent figure, and so varied and striking have been his achievements generally, that he never seems to be off the scene. Lope de Vega and his 1500 dramas was not more wonderful than Mr. Gladstone and his thousands of speeches; while, as a pamphleteer and controversialist, Mr. Gladstone's performances have been hardly less stupendous. We shall best arrive at some estimate of his gigantic labours, perhaps, if we adopt a system of classification which will allow of separate points of view; taking him, first, in regard to his parliamentary career; secondly, as a literary man; and, thirdly, in relation to his social and general characteristics.

We have already described the circumstances under which he made his entry upon the political stage as member for Newark, and the manner of his *début* as an orator. When the troubled question of colonial slavery had been placed beyond further debate or argument, Mr. Gladstone advanced to the consideration of a variety of more or less important matters, but more especially devoting himself to questions connected with the Church, of which he constituted himself a most

zealous champion. He spoke against Lord Althorp's Bill for reducing the number of Irish bishops, and against Mr. Hume's Universities Admission Bill, which removed the obligation upon persons entering Oxford University of subscribing to the Thirty-nine Articles; but on both occasions he found himself a member of a small minority. In the second session of his parliamentary experience (1834), on Sir Robert Peel accepting the premiership, he was made a Junior Lord of the Treasury, and the following year was promoted to the post of Under Secretary for the Colonies. In April 1835 Sir Robert Peel's Government was overthrown, being defeated on the Irish Church question. It is not a little remarkable that Mr. Gladstone should at this time, having only been two years in Parliament and being not more than twenty-five years of age, have filled two Government offices, and made himself a name as a speaker. From 1835 to 1841 Mr. Gladstone and his party remained in opposition, and during that period the future Premier took part in all the principal debates and strengthened his reputation in many ways. When it again came to Sir Robert Peel's turn to form a Ministry, Mr. Gladstone received the appointment of Vice-President of the Board of Trade and Master of the Mint. Soon after the accession to office of the Peel Ministry, Parliament had to battle with the great Free-trade wave that was breaking over the country, exciting the people to tumult, and forcing the Government to take action. The sliding scale of corn duties was at this juncture introduced by Sir Robert Peel, and it devolved upon Mr. Gladstone to elucidate the Ministerial proposal, and defend it against the more

advanced proposals put forward by the leader of the Opposition, Lord John Russell. The Government scheme was carried, and a revised British tariff was thereupon introduced, Mr. Gladstone being chiefly responsible for the working out of the plan, and piloting it successfully past the shoals and quicksands of opposition. But the Corn-Law agitation was still kept up, gathering additional force at every stage; motion after motion continued to be put to the House of Commons, and before long it became evident that nothing short of the total repeal of the obnoxious laws would satisfy the country. Meanwhile, Mr. Gladstone had been appointed President of the Board of Trade, in succession to the Earl of Ripon, and during the two years that he held this post much of the hard practical work of legislation fell to his lot. In May 1845 Mr. Gladstone resigned, in order that he might have perfect freedom of action in regard to the Maynooth Improvement Bill, then before the House, and might purge himself from suspicion of being actuated by personal motives in taking upon himself to support the Bill. Such conscientious action as this increased the respect felt for him by his colleagues, and indicated very clearly that in religious matters his mind was slowly but surely broadening towards toleration and equality. In December 1845 Sir Robert Peel pronounced in favour of the repeal of the Corn Laws; and as the proposal did not meet with the approval of some of his colleagues, he resigned. Being subsequently induced by her Majesty to withdraw his resignation, he resumed office with a Ministry somewhat different in its composition from his previous one. Mr.

Gladstone acknowledged his conversion to Free-trade principles by accepting the portfolio of Colonial Secretary in the reconstructed Cabinet. But now again was he troubled with conscientious scruples; he could not bring himself to continue to sit for Newark, under the wing of the Duke of Newcastle, who was an uncompromising Protectionist, and at the same time advocate the adoption of Free-trade; so he resigned his membership. Although without a seat in the House during the remainder of the session, Mr. Gladstone's influence was strongly exercised in favour of Free-trade, and there is little doubt that he was greatly instrumental in getting the measure pushed forward. It has been claimed for him, indeed, that he was, in the official sphere, 'the leading pioneer of the movement.'

At the general election of 1847 Mr. Gladstone was returned for Oxford University, and during Lord John Russell's retention of office he proved himself an undoubted power on all the leading questions of the day, taking part in the principal debates, and evincing year by year a steady falling away from the principles of Conservatism. In 1852, on the formation of the Derby Ministry, he was urged to accept office; but he declined, being by this time so far alienated in opinion from his former colleagues that he no longer accounted himself as belonging to their party. His great rival, Mr. Disraeli, was now Chancellor of the Exchequer, and when the Budget came to be propounded, Mr. Gladstone, in the fulness of his fiscal knowledge, attacked it as a weak and unworthy measure, and by his able criticisms succeeded in defeating the Government. On the overthrow of the Derby Cabinet, the Earl of Aberdeen formed

a Coalition Ministry, in which Mr. Gladstone filled the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer. On the 18th of April 1853, he presented to the House of Commons such a striking and successful Budget as convinced members on both sides of the House that he was the most able Minister of finance that England had had for a long time. The speech in which he introduced this famous Budget was a masterly and lucid exposition of financial details, and made a deep impression upon the House. The care and labour he bestowed upon the preparation of his Budgets were remarkable. It is related that on one occasion, being in the London offices of Mr. Lindsay, the shipowner, engaged in making a note of some shipping returns for his Budget, Mr. Gladstone was observed by a brusque but wealthy Sunderland shipowner, who rather admired the industrious and intelligent way in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer did his work. After regarding him for a while, and not in the least knowing who he was, the shipowner at last addressed him: 'Thou writes a bonny hand, thou dost,' he said. 'I am glad you think so,' was the reply. 'Ah, thou dost; thou makes thy figures weel; thou'rt just the chap I want.' 'Indeed.' 'Yes, indeed,' said the Sunderland man: 'I'm a man of few words, noo; if thou'lt come over to Sunderland I'll gie thee 120*l.* a year. Noo, then.' 'I'm much obliged for the offer,' was the answer; 'and when Mr. Lindsay returns I'll consult him on the subject.' Mr. Lindsay presently came into the office, was told of the offer that had been made, and the joke was kept up for a minute or two, Mr. Lindsay at last remarking that he should be sorry to stand in the young man's way,

and that the sooner they knew each other the better. 'Allow me, therefore,' he said, 'to introduce to you the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, of the Exchequer.' After that explanation, the Sunderland shipowner enjoyed the joke quite as much as Mr. Gladstone.

We now bring Mr. Gladstone's parliamentary history down to the period of the Crimean War, when, as has been so well said, England 'drifted' into a desperate and costly struggle. All Mr. Gladstone's dreams of favourable Budgets and increased commercial prosperity were now rudely dissipated, and, instead of pursuing the line of reduced taxation, he found himself suddenly compelled to increase the burdens of the country in order to meet an enormous war expenditure. During the trying period of the existence of the Aberdeen Ministry, he managed the financial affairs of the State with remarkable ability; and, as was natural, on the collapse of the Coalition Cabinet, and a reconstruction of Government by Lord Palmerston in February 1855, Mr. Gladstone was continued in the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer. Shortly afterwards, on Mr. Roebuck pressing his demand for a Committee of Inquiry into the condition of the British army before Sebastopol, he resigned, being succeeded by Sir G. C. Lewis. In 1856 there came the Treaty of Peace, and a return to quieter times. In 1858 Lord Derby once more undertook the duty of forming a Ministry, the Palmerston Government having been defeated on the Conspiracy to Murder Bill, introduced after the attempt made by Orsini on the life of the Emperor of the French, and brought forward, it was maintained, at the dictation of the French Govern-

ment. Mr. Gladstone made one of his most powerful speeches in opposition to this measure. The same year Mr. Gladstone accepted the appointment of Lord High Commissioner Extraordinary to the Ionian Islands; and, going out to Corfu to investigate and decide upon the claims of the Ionian people to incorporation with Greece, he advised that the cession of the islands should be conceded; and ultimately, in June 1864, this arrangement was formally carried into effect.

On the reaccession to power of Lord Palmerston in 1859, Mr. Gladstone was again installed in the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer, and for the next six years he continued to fill that office with distinction and to the satisfaction of the country. In 1860 the French Treaty of Commerce was effected, the details thereof having been arranged with remarkable ability and success by Mr. Cobden, to whom Mr. Gladstone paid a warm tribute of respect when he came to expound the scheme to the House of Commons. Mr. Gladstone's long tenure of office on this occasion was, indeed, signalised by the passing of many fiscal measures of great utility and benefit to the country. Under his financial *régime* the excise duty on paper was abolished, the income-tax was greatly reduced, and many other imposts were either swept away or materially diminished. His Budget speeches were perhaps the most successful enunciations of financial policy which this century has known; they were always listened to with eager interest by crowded benches, and were instinct with the true vigour and fire of oratory.

At the general election of 1865 the University of Oxford rejected Mr. Gladstone; his depar-

ture from the Tory principles which he had originally been elected to support, and had at one time so eloquently supported, was now so complete that, notwithstanding his great name as a statesman and financier, the full Tory strength of the University was exerted against him, and Mr. Gathorne Hardy was elected in his place. South Lancashire, however, succeeded in carrying him, and the right honourable gentleman sat for this constituency down to the year 1868, when defeat attended his efforts once again. Greenwich, however, had meanwhile elected him; and when he next entered the House of Commons it was as Prime Minister, possessing the support of a very substantial majority. The events of the five years of government which now ensued are well within the memory of all who take an interest in public affairs, and need not be dwelt upon in detail. Amongst the more important measures which the Gladstone Government succeeded in carrying through Parliament, it will be sufficient to enumerate the Irish Church Disestablishment Act, the Endowed Schools Bill, the Irish Land Act, the Ballot Act, the Elementary Education Act, the Bill for the Abolition of Purchase in the Army, and the University Tests Bill. It has been given to few Ministries to place upon the statute-books so numerous an array of conspicuous acts of legislation within so short a period; and however much Mr. Gladstone's opponents may be inclined to depreciate the value of these various measures, there are few but will allow that in passing them Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues were moved by a sincere desire to further the best interests of the people, and to establish in the country the principles of jus-

tice and freedom. Such a swift succession of great measures was calculated to induce the opinion in many minds that the wheels of Government were travelling too fast, and it was presaged that the coach of State would soon be upset unless the Conservative brake were applied. When, therefore, Mr. Gladstone, in the early part of 1874, resolved to appeal to the country, the answer that came from the polling-booths was against him, and Mr. Disraeli, the Lord Beaconsfield of to-day, reigned in his stead. Since that time Mr. Gladstone has occupied a singular, but yet powerful, position in English politics. When in 1874 he found himself relegated to the 'cold shade of Opposition,' he stepped back from the press of political warfare, and would fain have passed the remainder of his days in scholarly retirement; but ever and anon he 'scented the battle from afar,' and plunged into the parliamentary arena again, and, veteran as he was, did gallant service for his party. Even though in January 1875 he abdicated the leadership of the Liberal party, he still constantly held himself in readiness for conflict; and his vigorous onslaughts upon the Turkish Government, Lord Beaconsfield's foreign policy, and the Tory rule generally have been amongst the most memorable oratorical sensations of the last three years. It is yet too soon to offer comment upon the manner in which Mr. Gladstone has borne himself in the impetuous attack he has recently made upon Midlothian, dislodging 'the bold Buccleuch' from the stronghold which had hitherto been regarded as almost impregnable; and to attempt to prophesy what Mr. Gladstone will do now that he has once more turned the tables upon his great rival would be altogether fruitless.

We must now say a few words about his literary career. His first great plunge into the world of letters was, as every one knows, in 1839, when he published his work on the *State in its Relations with the Church*; a work which evoked a very powerful article from Macaulay in the *Edinburgh Review*. The critic, while dissenting from Mr. Gladstone's theories, complimented him highly upon his talents, integrity, and benevolence, his unblemished character, and distinguished parliamentary abilities. In many respects Mr. Gladstone's book was the most able work which had been published in support of Church and State views; and it was not surprising that when, nearly thirty years afterwards, he stood forward as the parent of a measure for disestablishing the Irish Church, this book of his younger days should be brought up in evidence against him. It was interesting at this stage to find Mr. Gladstone resuming his pen as the critic of his own book, and demolishing the opinions of his youth with as much vigour as he had once advanced them. In his *Chapter of Autobiography*, issued in 1868, he said, 'I, the person who have now accepted a foremost share of the responsibility of endeavouring to put an end to the existence of the Irish Church as an Establishment, am also the person who, of all men in official, perhaps in public, life, did, until the year 1841, recommend, upon the highest and most imperious grounds, its resolute maintenance.' In this notable biographical chapter, Mr. Gladstone took great pains to show by what processes this change of opinion had been brought about. To take Mr. Gladstone's first book and Lord Macaulay's article, and read both by the light of *A Chap-*

ter of Autobiography, is a most interesting political study. In 1840, Mr. Gladstone published his work entitled *Church Principles considered in their Results*. In the interval between 1840 and 1858 was comprised the most active portion of Mr. Gladstone's political life; during that time his devotion to parliamentary duties was so complete that he had little leisure left for literary pursuits. In the last-named year, however, he surprised the world by the publication of his great work, *Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age*, which was at once received as an exhaustive and masterly effort, and won the gratitude of European scholars. The vigour of thought, the intense sympathy with the highest poetry, and the imaginative power displayed in Mr. Gladstone's volumes, excited surprise and wonder. In later years he has frequently returned to Homer and Greece as a field for sympathetic labour. In 1869 was published his *Juventus Mundi: Gods and Men of the Heroic Age in Greece*; in 1876 his *Homeric Synchronism*; and at intervals he has contributed many articles to leading reviews and magazines bearing on the Homeric poems. In 1874 we again find Mr. Gladstone writing on Church questions. 'What is Ritualism?' he asked and answered in an article in the *Contemporary Review*, much to the indignation of the Roman Catholics; and in a pamphlet on the *Vatican Decrees in their Bearing on Civil Allegiance: a Political Expostulation*, he returned to the attack with redoubled force, calling forth replies from the chief Romish prelates in England as well as from many distinguished laymen. So recently as last year the whole of Mr. Gladstone's miscellaneous writings were published in seven

volumes under the title of *Gleanings of Past Years*. These volumes do not include, however, his essays of a strictly controversial and classical nature.

In the literary aspect of Mr. Gladstone's career, no less than in its political aspect, one is forcibly struck with the immense amount of ground he has covered, and the stupendous results he has obtained. His pen has been as ready as his tongue to give expression to his views on all manner of subjects; and if now and then he has been liable to the charge of ponderosity, there has never been absent from his writings that fulness of thought which is more valuable than mere grace of expression, and a sincerity and earnestness which carry with them the stamp of firm conviction.

Coming now to examine the social and domestic side of Mr. Gladstone's character, we are met with a diversity of action and an adaptability of mind which are altogether extraordinary. No matter in what circumstances he finds himself placed—whether at a flower show, a gathering of operatives on strike, or at a reunion of dramatic celebrities—he has always the 'word in season' ready; he can always advance a wealth of pertinent ideas, and enlarge upon the duties and obligations of the people he addresses. The daily newspapers are for ever on the alert for the words of wisdom, or of denunciation, or of entreaty that he may be prevailed upon to utter in his goings from place to place. His kindliness of heart is so great, and so active is his mind, that he is easily prevailed upon to speak or to write on anything and everything at a moment's notice. In his triumphal journeys to Midlothian and back he has been waylaid at all the principal stations on the route by deputations and

miscellaneous crowds, and has deigned to launch forth his invectives against his political opponents with as much seriousness from a carriage-window as if he had been standing in some large hall surrounded by his own particular satellites. His industry is marvellous. His correspondence is probably as great as that of half a dozen editors; he is pestered daily with letters from all parts of the kingdom—letters asking his opinion on every conceivable subject; letters inviting him to take the chair at, or address, political gatherings; letters requesting charitable donations; and letters of compliment, criticism, or complaint without end. No wonder that Mr. Gladstone should have recourse to post-cards to facilitate the sending of replies. It is a great saving of time to Mr. Gladstone to be able to inform John Smith on a post-card that he (Mr. Gladstone) never did vote for the abolition of knee-breeches, or to answer William Jones some mysterious question on the law of hypothec, or to tell Mrs. Thompson that he is much obliged for the valuable hamper of vegetables and the innumerable good wishes he has received from her. As a true financier and economist Mr. Gladstone could not pretend to shut his eyes to the advantages of communication by post-card, especially when it is considered that it was a Gladstone Government that invented it.

The public journals are much beholden to Mr. Gladstone for the variety of subjects he gives them to write about in the course of a working year. Now it is 'Mr. Gladstone on Gardening;' now 'Mr. Gladstone on the Study of Natural History;' now 'Mr. Gladstone on Sunday Observance,' or 'On the Cultivation of Art,' or 'On Railway Travelling,' or 'On

the Advantages of Music.' In the days of his brief retirement at Hawarden, after relinquishing the leadership of the Liberal party, he found vent for his excessive energy in the occupation of wood-cutting. In contrast with this vigorous taste may be put Mr. Gladstone's well-known passion for pottery. At one time he possessed a magnificent collection of china and bric-à-brac, and his knowledge of such things is that of a connoisseur. As an instance of his power of appreciating the artistic value of articles of this class, his speech on the occasion of laying the foundation stone of the Wedgwood Institute at Burslem ought not to be forgotten.

We have yet to speak of Mr. Gladstone's domestic life. Mr. Gladstone was married in 1839 to Catherine, daughter of Sir Stephen Richard Glynne of Hawarden Castle, Flintshire, a descendant of the Serjeant Glynne who was Lord Chief Justice in Cromwell's time, and to whom Butler makes this allusion in *Hudibras*:

'Was not the king by proclamation
Declared a rebel all over the nation?
Did not the learned Glyn and Maynard
To make good subjects traitors strain
hard?'

It was Lord Chief Justice Glynne who bought Hawarden Castle from the Derby family after the execution of James, seventh Earl of Derby. On the death of Mrs. Gladstone's brother, Sir Stephen Richard Glynne, the eighth baronet, in 1874, the baronetcy became extinct, there being no son to inherit the title; the main portion of the wealth of the Glynnes, however, descended to Mrs. Gladstone. Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone have had eight children, seven of whom survive, four sons and three daughters. The eldest son, Mr. W. H. Gladstone, has

just been elected M.P. for East Worcestershire, having previously represented Whitby in Parliament; the second son, the Rev. Stephen Edward Gladstone, is Rector of Hawarden; the third son, Henry Neville Gladstone, keeps up the commercial reputation of the Gladstone family; and the youngest son, Herbert John Gladstone, has lately come forward as a candidate for parliamentary honours, having at the late general election unsuccessfully contested Middlesex in the Liberal interest, and at the present time being before the electors of Leeds as the chosen Liberal candidate in place of his father, who was elected both for Leeds and Midlothian, but has decided to sit for the latter constituency. Mr. Gladstone's eldest daughter, Agnes, is the wife of the Rev. E. C. Wickham, M.A., head-master of Wellington College. His two other daughters, Mary and Helen, are unmarried.

— In thus rapidly sketching a long and illustrious career many important features have necessarily passed unnoticed, but such a broad general outline has been marked out as will, it is hoped, indicate the mainstages by which Mr. Gladstone has attained to his present greatness. He has been more lauded and more denounced, probably, than any man of his time. He has been accused of almost every possible political crime, and not a few private ones. It has been asserted that he is a Jesuit, that he is a Russian spy, and that, in fact, in him has been personified all the seven cardinal sins. So many evil things were said against him a couple of years ago that the Turkish newspapers found out that the ex-Premier was a Bulgarian. 'His father was a pig-dealer in the vilayet of Kustendje,' said the report; 'and young Glad-

stone ran away at the age of sixteen to Servia, and was then, with another pig-dealer, sent to London to sell pigs. He sold the proceeds, changed his name from Trozadin to Gladstone, and became a British subject. Fortune favoured him till he became Prime Minister. Gladstone has no virtues.' His enemies in England have been hardly more correct in their estimate of his character and motives. To begin with, he was, according to Macaulay, 'the rising hope of those stern and unbending Tories;' to-day he is the Tories' evil genius, following them with his merciless shafts of deprecation whichever way they turn. On the other hand, the Liberals regard him with such an amount of admiration and devotion as they have had for no other leader in modern times. To them he is the perfect statesman, the man who combines in himself the highest gifts of oratory, the greatest ability as a financier, and the most honest and upright views of statesmanship of any man living. One would have liked Macaulay to have been spared to see the change which has come over Mr. Gladstone's political theories in these later years, and to have expressed his opinion upon them in the same free and candid manner that he did in 1839. He would have found that there was little that was 'unbending' in Mr. Gladstone's Toryism, after all, and would have been astonished to see that the once member for Newark had developed into a much more advanced Liberal than ever Lord Macaulay himself could claim to be. But even at the commencement of his parliamentary career Mr. Gladstone was too extensive in his mental range to admit of his being brought within the focus of ordinary criticism. It has often been unfortunate for Mr. Gladstone that he has seen so

much of a subject at one time; he has had a clear view of all the shadows that have been hovering around, and has often fought with them when it might have been better to have passed them by. The shadows have occasionally been more to him than the substance. 'He has one gift,' said Macaulay, 'most dangerous to a speculator, a vast command of a kind of language, grave and majestic, but of vague and uncertain import.' It is not a difficult transition from this charge of redundancy of words to a more recent charge made by Lord Beaconsfield against Mr. Gladstone's 'exuberant verbosity.' Certainly Mr. Gladstone has excelled all living men in the length and number of his speeches, but it is from the fulness of his heart and the passion that is within his soul that he has spoken, not for the sake of any mere oratorical display. Speaking has been as natural to him as thinking or breathing, and Nature, and not art, has always been his prompter. To Mr. Gladstone life, and above all statesmanship, is a very serious matter. He cannot bring himself, except on very rare occasions, to deal with a question tenderly and airily; he is too sincere and earnest for that; there is such a supreme gravity about him that sallies of wit and little sparkles of playfulness are almost entirely lost upon him. His solemnity of style has been in strange contrast to the verbal sharp-shooting which Lord Beaconsfield has so frequently indulged in, and of which Mr. Gladstone has so often been the victim. The obscure member who rose to assail the great Conservative leader, in the House of Commons period of his existence, was lightly and unceremoniously brushed away; a similar personage rising to arraign Mr. Gladstone as a traitor and a

trickster, and really too insignificant and absurd to be able to gain the sympathy of his own side of the House, would provoke Mr. Gladstone to turn upon him the full force of his indignation. It is something like answering a smart rap inflicted by a cane with a heavy blow from a sledge-hammer. But, notwithstanding this absence of the lighter weapons of oratory, Mr. Gladstone is one of the finest speakers that have ever graced the British Parliament. When the career of Mr. Gladstone comes to be regarded apart from the excitement and prejudice of contemporary events; when he has finally ended his labours and doffed his harness; when the shadows of party warfare have moved away from the scene, driven back by the advancing rush of fresh parties and fresh objects of contention; and when the biographers and historians of a later generation step forward to assess the good and evil which the statesmen of to-day may have wrought,—when all these things come to pass, the name of Mr. Gladstone will be more bright and lustrous even than now, and the world will hold him in memory for the great and good work he has done for his country, and for the noble piety and integrity of his life.

MR. ROBERTSON GLADSTONE.

As we have already shown, Mr. Robertson Gladstone was the only commercial man amongst the sons of Sir John Gladstone. The fortunes of the Gladstone family had been already made in business when Mr. Robertson Gladstone elected to continue the house of Gladstone & Co.; nevertheless, when he came to manhood, he threw himself into the work with as much ardour as if his fortune had been still to make. Mr.

Robertson Gladstone, like George Heriot, was of opinion that commerce was most honourable, and he followed it diligently and with profit for a large number of years. While his brother, Mr. W. E. Gladstone, was devoting all his strength and intellect to the work of the nation, Mr. Robertson Gladstone was quietly, steadily, and persistently extending the operations of the firm of Gladstone & Co., of which he rose to be the head on the death of his father in 1851. As a business man he was highly respected, and in the public affairs of Liverpool always took the most lively interest. In 1852 he was elected mayor of the borough, and was repeatedly solicited to allow himself to be brought forward as a parliamentary candidate, but he declined. Like his brothers, he started political life as a Tory, but during the great Free-trade agitation gradually veered to the Liberal side, and became one of the most active supporters of the cause in Liverpool. His knowledge of trade matters was very extensive; and it is said that on many questions of fiscal and commercial policy the experience and knowledge of the Liverpool merchant were of great service to his brother when, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, he had to deal with financial and trading concerns. The strongest feeling of affection always subsisted between Mr. Robertson Gladstone and his distinguished brother. Whenever the ex-Premier came to Liverpool he invariably called at his brother's office in Orange Court. During the memorable contest for South-west Lancashire, on the polling-day Mr. W. E. Gladstone was at his brother Robertson's office, sitting in a private room, quietly engaged in the translation of a portion of his beloved *Iliad*, while telegram after telegram arrived

telling how the election was proceeding. Mr. Robertson Gladstone served Liverpool with great fidelity and vigour; he was essentially a public-spirited man and a philanthropist, and both as a magistrate and as a member of the Municipal Corporation was deeply respected. At one time he made a strong effort to put down drunkenness in Liverpool. Morning after morning he was called upon in his magisterial capacity to inflict fines upon persons charged with being drunk, and the number of cases of this nature got to be so appalling that he at last decided upon publishing in the local papers every day the names and addresses of all drunkards brought before the bench. He carried this into force for a considerable time; but, unfortunately, the idea did not answer, publicity proved to have few terrors for the hordes of miserable creatures who were brought up before him for drunkenness, and his well-meant endeavours proved fruitless. He was a careful, kind, and conscientious magistrate, discharging the duties of the office with very great ability. He also gave a large share of his time to the work of the Town Council; and it is worthy of remark, as showing the regard in which he was held by

his townsmen, that for very many years he sat as the representative of the most influential ward in the town, that of Abercromby, and was year after year returned without opposition. All local movements of a charitable nature were sure of his sympathy and active support, and his benefactions to the institutions of the town were very numerous. He was a man of large heart and clear understanding, and has left a name behind him which will not soon be forgotten.

The house of Gladstone & Co. yet remains one of honour and note in Liverpool, and carries on an extensive business. The Gladstones still possess large sugar and other plantations in the West Indies, and have trade connections with various parts of the world. Mr. Robertson Gladstone's sons now take an active part in the direction of the firm's affairs, and the reputation of the old house is as great as ever. A firm that, while doing so much for the commercial advancement of the country, has in one of its sons been linked with the highest position in the State, has good cause to be remembered amongst the firms that have made their fortunes in business.

MYRTALE.

'Ipsam me melior quam peteret Venus,
Grata detinuit compede Myrtale
Libertina, fretis acrior Headrise
Currantis Calabros sinus.'—HOR. Od. i. 33.

'Amour est un étrange maître.'—LA FONTAINE.

FATAL Love, hapless Love,
Why hast thou thus bound me ?
Why with deadly toils and snares
Ever thus surround me ?
Though with many a specious art
Glycera may woo me,
Lo, Myrtale thou must send,
And thus quite undo me !

Never slave, helpless slave,
Toiling in war-galley,
Wore such adamantine chains
As do I, Myrtale.
Though I strive to break the spell
Which thou weav'st around me,
Glycera must woo in vain—
Thou alone hast bound me.

Other loves, fitter loves,
May around me rally ;
At thy coming they must flee,
Queen of Love, Myrtale !
Wild as Adriatic wave
On Calabria dashing,
Brilliant as the blood-red flame
From tall Pharos flashing.

Though thy chain, golden chain,
All my love confining,
Thou hast cast around my soul,
Heed not my repining.
While this bright to-day is ours,
Sorrow, hear our *vale* !
Love and joy and life may be
Bright with thee, Myrtale !

A. H. M.

THE MYSTERY IN PALACE GARDENS.

BY MRS. J. H. RIDDELL.

CHAPTER XIV.

AT SUNNYDOWN FARM.

Mrs. PALTHORPE'S mind might have remained at rest concerning that question as to whether she should be made an 'honest woman,' to use a most singular, though common, phrase, with a legal right to all the many good things she had hitherto enjoyed as a mere matter of favour, or left with some small settlement to make the best of a bad position. If Mr. Hay had been possessed of so little compunction and such strong sense as to seize the opportunity offered to cut the knot of his difficulty without hesitation, this story of a man's kindly heart and honourable weakness, and of a woman's selfish baseness, could never have been written.

Through the hours and the days and the weeks she sat wondering whether he would marry her; marvelling what he would allow her if he did not; and planning how she would order her future life if she had to leave The Aspens and all the luxuries and comforts which there surrounded her.

As for him, the notion of not marrying her never crossed his mind. It could not be said that he considered what would be best for his own happiness, since the idea that any choice was left, that two courses were open, did not then, did not afterwards, occur to him. He had done a wrong; what lay ready to his hand was to right that wrong so far as lay in his power. If Mr. Palthorpe

had returned, he meant, so soon as she was free, to marry her. Now Mr. Palthorpe was dead, there lay a heavier necessity upon him to make her his wife. He owed a double duty now—to the living woman, to the dead man—and he would discharge that duty.

It was not a necessity to try to evade, a matter concerning which there could be argument or hesitation. It had to be done. Some men pay their debts, and some compound them. To the former class he belonged. All the years of his life he knew could not be long enough to liquidate the liabilities he had incurred, but he would pay so far as lay in his power. He would accept the responsibility without demur; he did not appeal against the sentence he knew he deserved.

All this time, ever since the morning when in the faint gray light he first saw her standing under the Portuguese laurel—a tree which had already become in his mind almost identical with the upas—the deadly canker of the second life he led was eating into his very soul. Until that period life had been all straightforward, nothing to conceal in it, nothing to confess; from his childhood he had been, if somewhat reserved and reticent, perfectly truthful and straightforward; but from the hour he fell under the influence of her fatal beauty this was changed. He could not be outspoken on such a subject. Even if she had been single when they first met, the

difference in rank and the influence of his somewhat restricted education would have kept him silent concerning the admiration he felt; and ever since, existence had seemed to him a long lie. The burden of the secret was sometimes more than he could bear; setting aside the shame and scandal of an open trial, he felt anything would be welcome that evaded the necessity for concealment, and enabled him to abandon the mystery and artifices necessitated by the very nature of the life he was leading.

The past he could not undo; but in the future he might atone; and he longed with pitiful earnestness for the day when, calling the woman, for whom he felt passionate love no longer, wife, he might begin to lead a new life, and on the ruins of his former happiness erect a dwelling where he should not be afraid to meet the eye of man, and bring up his children—for there were children—unconscious of the taint of shame that overshadowed their birth.

He did not know then what he grasped afterwards—that a sin never dies; that though confined and buried it will even in this world burst its tomb; that there is a visible resurrection here for almost every crime a man can commit; and that the more sensitive his conscience, the more tender his heart, the more certain will be its appearance, the more terrible its coming. Ay, thrust the mould over it as he will, pile the weight of years on the top of it if he can, it will quicken at last, and after lying for autumns and winters forgotten, for so many autumns and winters that the sinner himself has grown acquainted with the sere and yellow leaves of human life and the snows and frosts of threescore years and ten, it will spring up and bear

fruit, so that all who pass by may see what manner of seed was planted there.

Of all that was in his mind, however, he said no word to the woman he meant to walk with him through the years to come. Never accustomed to talk much about his feelings to any one, circumstances, as well as the unsympathetic quality of her character, had combined to render him especially reserved towards her. His difficulties, his plans, his intentions, his aspirations were things he would have found it hard to express to any one, and he found it doubly hard to express them to her. In that vague future, perhaps, to which he looked forward with a hope born out of the misery of the present, he might be able to talk more freely; but even these little things, insignificant in themselves, but pregnant with meaning to him, indicated there would be a difference always between his married life and the married lives of other men.

For instance, one morning, walking from his lodgings into the City, he passed a church in the Bloomsbury district, from the doors of which a wedding-party were just issuing.

It was not a grand wedding in any sense of the word. The guests bidden did not clearly belong to the Upper Ten. There was no glamour of rank and fashion about the affair, neither was it encircled by any halo of riches. The carriages were evidently hired; the dresses of the company were by no means magnificent; but the bride was young and innocent-looking; and her family had come to the ceremony, and the bridegroom's friends were there as well; and every one looked pleased and happy; and there was clearly no mystery about

the affair, no phantom lurking behind the pillars of the portico, no skeleton awaiting the arrival of the newly-married pair in the house they were going to, wherever it might be.

No such wedding-morn as that could dawn for him. In the sight of men who knew him it was impossible he could take her for his lawful wife. It would all have to be done secretly and privately. To that ceremony he could not bid father, mother, brother, or sister. With a groan he turned from the glad voices and the smiling faces, and, taking a narrow by-lane, plunged into a maze of unfamiliar streets, and so lost sight of the party.

But he did not forget the comparison it had provoked. All day, for many days, he caught himself thinking in a stupid dissatisfied dream of what his marriage might have been, of what life might have held for him, had he left Mr. Marker's a little earlier or chosen a different road back to town.

The same feeling oppressed him when he saw children in the arms of their nurses stopped and admired by friends of their parents, and greeted openly in the public streets.

Ah, who would stop his children and speak to them? Himself had fixed a gulf neither they nor he could pass, which must for ever keep his own kindred and the innocent babies asunder; for them no grandfather's presents, no grandmother's caresses, no doting aunts, no loving cousins!

And then he would turn away also from places where he saw these meetings and greetings, and go down into the busy City and fight the business battle, and strive for Mammon's prizes with the best.

So that on the occasions when they did meet the impressions

left by these thoughts, and such as these, increased his natural reserve, and gave perhaps some colourable ground for Mrs. Palthorpe's fear that he now perhaps meant to cast her adrift, though, indeed, the chief desire in the man's mind was to make atonement, and to remedy as far as in him lay the wrong he had done.

Though entertaining not the slightest doubt of Mr. Palthorpe's death, he was too sensible and too careful a man to neglect any possible means of satisfying himself upon the point.

Every one who was to be seen on the subject he saw; every scrap of confirmatory evidence he gathered and garnered together; and the result was he felt as sure as the mate and the captain, both of whom beheld the waves engulf him, that the handsome generous young fellow, who, having lost all for love, had gone afar off to seek fortune and health, could return to his native land no more.

'Best so,' thought the man, who could never recall those frank blue eyes, that gracious ingenuous manner, that pleasant voice now hushed in death, that warm grateful clasp of a hand cold and stiff, which might never grasp his again, without the feeling that he himself had sent the confiding husband to his grave. 'Best so,' better to go down into the cruel ocean trusting and believing, than to return and find the woman for whose sake he gave up fortune, station, kindred, false as the lightest of her sex!

When the various interviews were over, and all possible inquiries made and ended, he told how he had been engaged, and what he had done.

'I am going abroad on business,' he said, 'for a short time; when I return we will make our

arrangements for the future.' And so he left her, with the certain resolution in his own mind of doing such justice as he might, but failing to explain in explicit words to her precisely what he meant.

And she was afraid to inquire. For the first time in her life her tongue refused to ask the question her heart longed to put. Not from shyness, but from dread. She knew he could leave her; she was well aware there was no bond between them strong enough to compel marriage unless he chose to accord it.

She felt in worse plight now than she had done before the arrival of the tidings that made her a widow; then, she considered in a vague sort of way, he would have to deal with one stronger than himself; now, she had no one to trust to but herself. Vaguely she understood her personal hold upon the man who held her future fate in his hands was but slender; and, as has before been said, her faith in generosity, justice, duty, was of the feeblest.

In his shoes she knew how she would walk. She plumbed the depths of her own selfishness, and found no thought for another would keep her constant if interest drew her in a contrary direction. His silence she misconstrued, as, indeed, many wiser women might have done; she had seen almost nothing of the world, and was perfectly unaware that, while her own sex find relief in 'talking over' their troubles, the other feel it little less than agony to converse concerning their mental wounds.

'I shall die if I do not speak,' says a woman. 'I cannot bear my burden if I do,' says a man.

For this reason, and for no other, he held his peace; and she, miserable and unsettled, awaited

his return, much as a criminal awaits the sentence of his judge.

While he was away she took an opportunity of going down to Ravelsmade.

She had her reasons for revisiting her old home, or she never would have taken the journey.

Once each year, at least, since her husband's departure, she went to see her relatives; but these visits were necessary: this, on the face of it, did not seem to be so.

Concerning that matter, however, Mrs. Palthorpe was to herself perfectly frank.

'I had better keep in with them,' she said mentally, without the smallest reservation; 'no one knows what may happen,' and accordingly she went to the old place dressed in widow's weeds, and stayed long enough to decide that, whatever happened, she could not, would not, go back to that life.

'I would rather beg my bread in London than spend the rest of my days in this dismal farmhouse,' she muttered in confidence to her pillow; and it is only fair to add her aunt's views concerning her future residence in that part of the country chanced for once to be identical with those entertained by the niece.

'I wouldn't have her here,' thought the honest, hard-working, economical creature; 'not if she paid me a hundred a year.'

In order to cover the actual reasons for her residence in London, Mrs. Palthorpe had, at a very early period, announced her intention of earning her own living in the metropolis. She had a taste for millinery, she said, and could get an engagement. Never once had Miss Aggles doubted the truth of this statement. At the farm the inmates were not given to inventing or circulating

untruths; and, honest themselves, they saw nothing inconsistent in Mrs. Palthorpe's proceedings.

They left her to settle matters with her husband when he came back; meanwhile they were perhaps glad she elected to relieve them of her presence.

Ever since she grew up her ways had not been their ways; and as her grandfather grew older and more infirm he cared less for young people and their restless habits than of old.

'Miry tires me,' he complained to his daughter. He had always been fond of and proud of her; but while she was about the place there seemed a shadow on it, which lightened when her visit ended and she was travelling back to town.

In good truth 'Miry,' as the old man called her, was enough to tire any one. Nothing about the farm satisfied her; she could not find a pleasant word to speak concerning house or furniture, bird or beast. The country held no charm for her. The peace and silence of the quiet homestead made her wretched and discontented. Nothing looked well; nothing was done right.

'Miry has got London ways,' said her grandfather—which, indeed, was a most unfair reflection upon London; but Mr. Aggles knew no better—'and we can't please her now.'

No, they could not please her—Miss Aggles knew they had never been able to compass that; and accordingly, when she saw her niece, arrayed in the deepest mourning, cross their threshold, the sight filled her with the gravest apprehensions.

'She is surely not coming to live with us,' thought Miss Aggles, in terror; but Mrs. Palthorpe soon reassured her.

'No; I am going back again

the day after to-morrow,' she said, in answer to her aunt's inquiry. 'I thought as we were not very busy I would come down and see how you were getting on and talk things over.'

'Father has taken it sorely to heart,' remarked Miss Aggles, referring to Mr. Palthorpe's death of course, and not to any other fact which he might have been more disposed to take to heart had he chanced to be acquainted with it.

'It was about the last thing we expected to hear, wasn't it?' said Mrs. Palthorpe, with admirable composure. 'Where is grandfather—in the water-meadow? I'll go and find him.'

'Well, you do take it cool,' observed Miss Aggles, looking after the retreating figure as it went sweeping over the grassy path leading away to the calm meandering river.

In the evening, when they were seated in the dark parlour, dimly lighted by two heavy-framed windows almost covered with roses and creepers, talking low and softly about the dead man, the same idea was once again forced upon Miss Aggles' understanding.

'I can't believe it real,' the old farmer was saying. 'It seems to me just impossible to believe that I am here, and he is lying drowned in that waste of waters. I never am able to get the thought of him out of my mind.'

Mrs. Palthorpe carefully smoothed out the creases in her crape and remained silent.

'It was an ill day for him, my lass, when he took up with your pretty face,' went on Mr. Aggles (framed in a widow's cap that face looked at the speaker with a certain degree of interest); 'for you were a pretty girl then—'

'Mira thinks she is pretty still,' interposed Miss Aggles;

who had never been beautiful, and was, perhaps, not sorry to deal her niece this backhanded blow.

Mrs. Palthorpe spoke.

'Have I lost my looks, then?' she asked, with a show of feeling she never displayed when her lost husband was the topic of conversation.

'No, no; you are a good-looking woman still,' answered her grandfather, with cruel candour, and a deprecatory sort of kindness more terrible to the subject than any criticism could have proved, no matter how severe; 'but you are not a girl any more, and you have not got the colour you used to have, and you are peaked a bit with fretting.'

There was an awkward pause. Mrs. Palthorpe had looked at the speaker for a moment in dismay; then she recommenced smoothing out those folds in her crape. Miss Aggles watched her carefully.

'And it is right you should fret, my dear,' went on the old man, pursuing his old train of thought, perfectly unconscious of the fire and fury his granddaughter was smothering, as she sat idly passing her hands continually over the crape she wore; 'for it is not often a girl is taken to by a man like that, and has not cause to rue it; quite right the face that cost him so much should look worn and changed now he cannot come back any more to fetch the colour to the cheeks and the smiles to the mouth. I would not have liked you to be less sorry, though it has changed you, Miry; for he was a gallant gentleman and an honest man.'

She did not answer; she never lifted her head. Still that busy, busy hand kept smoothing, smoothing the crape which was worn for him.

'I can't believe it,' mused the

farmer; 'it seems to me impossible. When I think of him, it's not so many years ago, Miry, coming along the path through the plantations, with his gun and his dogs and his handsome face and pleasant manner. "A happy new year to you, Mr. Aggles," he said. "And many of them to you, Master Tom," I answered. "And many of them to you," he rattled back quick as shot. "Ah, sir," I said, "I can't look for many more." "Don't talk in that absurd way," he answered; "you'll outlive me most likely." When I think of that, as I began with remarking, I can't bring it home to myself that he is dead, that I shall never hear his cheery voice any more.'

'I wouldn't think of it, father,' said Miss Aggles.

'How can I help thinking of it?' answered the old man. 'Since the news came have I ever had him out of my head day or night, waking or sleeping? Why, it was only this afternoon, not an hour before Miry came down to the water-meadow, that I could have sworn I saw him on the other bank with his creel and fishing-tackle. I had to rub my eyes to make sure there was nobody; and yesterday morning I thought I saw somebody skirt the hawthorn hedge beside the paddock, and I thought, "For certain that's Master Tom," and again it was no human being. Strange, isn't it?'

He made this appeal to his daughter, and for answer she only put her handkerchief to her eyes. Then he turned slowly to Mrs. Palthorpe. She answered by rising from her chair and leaving the room.

'I wouldn't talk about him before her, father,' remarked Miss Aggles, struggling with tears.

'Poor soul! she takes on, doesn't she, Jane? It was wrong

of me, but I felt I must speak out the things I had seen.'

'You did not see them, father; it all came from over-thinking,' answered Miss Aggles.

'Poor young gentleman!' said the farmer, who had been more shaken by the news than his daughter imagined. 'It was an evil day for him when he was caught by Miry's pretty face.'

'Ay, that it was,' answered Miss Aggles heartily, with more reason than even she conceived.

It is curious, but true, that whereas while the man was living these honest and perfectly non-conventional people had clearly understood the change in his worldly position wrought by his uncle's will, now they reverted to the days gone by, and, utterly ignoring the period of his struggling clerkship, the time when he, born, according to their ideas, in 'the purple,' lay between life and death, helped forward to recovery by the little money which could be sent up from Hampshire, thought and spoke of him only as Mr. Tom, as the future squire, as the blue-eyed open-faced young chap who used to come, gun in hand, dogs at heel, down to the farm, where one of the inmates, at all events, was far too pretty. As the future squire, as the gracious and graceful blue-eyed young gentleman with ready tongue and smooth face and pleasant manners, he could return no more; but—death is very merciful—without a blot or blemish, without the smallest decadence in the social scale, without loss of fortune, or the faintest struggle of any kind, the waters gave back the memory of this man, whose only fault had been loving too much and trusting as he loved.

Perfectly the old man saw the young Squire walking through the wood, as if he were present; Miss

Aggles gave him once more the glass of milk he asked for, with that winsome smile on his face; but from out their recollection was blotted the time during which he struggled for daily bread, when he lay in the poor mean room, looking out upon the Romford-road, fighting hard for life.

'We know he is better off,' said Miss Aggles, in a voice broken by tears.

'He would not thank us to bring him back, I feel sure of that,' answered the farmer; 'but it seems cruel hard for him to be drowned just when he stood a chance of having some comfort in his life. I don't know that I ever thought so much about his losing the old place as I did this morning, when I stood looking up at the plantation, with the sun shining down on the trees and the birds singing in the woods.'

'It does not signify to him now, father.'

'I know it does not; but I can't help my thoughts and feelings. I should not have minded so much if I could have seen him buried.'

Miss Aggles did not speak.

'And I have been thinking, too, Jane, that perhaps we might have done more for him when he was so ill. If I had sold Fury, and not grudged parting with him then, he could have had the cheque Mr. Sinton offered me for him. When the brute kicked himself lame and made himself of no account, as one may say, I felt it served me right for my greed and covetousness. If we had sent him that money, perhaps he would have got stronger, and need not have left the country and died without a friend near him.'

'Father, father,' entreated Miss Aggles, as the old man broke down fairly, 'don't take on in this way. You did all for the best; you

spared all you could, and never grudged a penny of it. If no one had more to reproach himself with than you, this world would be a different place. He understood, and he was grateful for the help you gave. Don't you recollect what he said before he went away? don't you remember the beautiful letter he wrote when he enclosed the money?'

'Yes; I was looking at it this morning,' said Mr. Aggles.

'I am sure if you had been his father he could not have used more feeling language.'

'No; and that is why I fret, and why I can't get over his death. If he had been different, forgetful, light-minded, ungrateful, I should not have felt it as I do; but he was so true and so good, I can't get over the loss.'

'You will in time,' she said gently, and with more feeling than the words themselves might seem to imply.

'You are right,' he answered; 'we get over everything in time; it is wonderful what it does—wonderful that the coming and going of days and nights should cure grief, and make us forget troubles as we do.'

She knew what he meant: she understood he was thinking of the vacant places round his hearth, of the empty seats once filled, of the faces that could look on him no more, of the grass-grown graves across which the shadow of the church-tower fell softly when the sun was westering. She was not young or pretty, or winning in manner; but she loved the old man tenderly, and the kiss she laid on his furrowed cheek was as touching in its womanly sympathy and filial affection as if she had been endowed with every personal grace.

'You have been a good daughter to me; your mother said you

would. God bless you, Jane; and having so spoken the old man rose, and remarking, 'I think I'll go to bed now; I am very tired,' walked more feebly than his wont across the parlour and up the wide easy staircase to his room.

For a few minutes after he went Miss Aggles remained standing by the window and looking out into the gathering twilight; then tying a handkerchief over her head she crossed the hall, and stepping out of doors went to seek her niece.

CHAPTER XV.

MRS. PALTHORPE IS FRANK.

MRS. PALTHORPE was walking up and down beside the quick clear river that flowed through Mr. Aggles' farm. She looked ghostly and mysterious in her trailing black garments, pacing restlessly close to the margin of the water, which seemed white by reason of the chalk over which it ran.

At a botanical garden in a country town, where a few monkeys and other animals were kept to lure shillings into the exchequer, Miss Aggles had once seen the 'restless Cavey' walking up and down at the length of its chain. She had not thought of the creature for years and years, but as she approached her niece the whole scene seemed to start up out of the depths of memory: the monkeys grinning behind the wires, the houses where the other beasts were kept, the trees standing so still and quiet in the sultry noontime, the scent of flowers, the smell of the animals, the sound of music—for it chanced to be a *fête*-day, and a band was playing in the distance.

It all came back to her, not as a recollection, but as a present

fact, with the Cavey in the foreground walking up and down without a moment's stop or pause.

Then the illusion vanished, and beside the clear swift river she beheld her niece pacing up and down just like a creature on the chain, and she knew it was that sight which had recalled the Cavey to her recollection.

'That looks as if she was miserable,' thought Miss Aggles, pausing for an instant to watch that restless pacing to and fro. 'I must have wronged her; and indeed how could she help feeling it?'

Mrs. Palthorpe could have answered that question, could have told how very easy it is for some people to feel nothing under heaven, save that which affects their own comfort and their own convenience.

'Aren't you afraid of catching cold, Mira, with nothing on your head?' asked Miss Aggles, drawing near her niece, who had stopped suddenly at sight of her.

'No,' answered Mrs. Palthorpe shortly (never specially remarkable for courtesy, in the *abandon* of family life she entirely dispensed with ceremony).

'I should not care to run the risk myself,' said Miss Aggles meekly. 'I dread so much being ill.'

'I am never ill,' returned Mrs. Palthorpe.

Miss Aggles stood silent for an instant; then she inquired whether her niece would rather be alone.

'Some,' she hinted, 'preferred to bear their trouble by themselves.'

'I don't,' was the reply: 'I am sick of being alone; besides, I want to ask you something. Do *you* think grandfather was right when he said what he did a while ago?'

'About seeing your husband, dear?' questioned Miss Aggles,

with a timorous glance towards the opposite bank; it was a lonely place and an eerie uncanny sort of light. 'O no! the dead *can't* come back; it was only his fancy.'

'I did not mean that nonsense,' explained Mrs. Palthorpe, in a tone of the most withering contempt; 'you remember what he said about my having lost my looks. Do *you* think I have?'

A child might have knocked Miss Aggles down at that moment. Never was woman more utterly astounded. Her good looks! She was thinking about looks, and her mourning so new the creases were not yet out of it! Pacing up and down, she had been considering whether she was as handsome as ever, instead of mourning for the husband who lay in no one could tell how many fathoms deep of water.

'Why do you ask?' she at length managed to say.

'Because I want to know,' was the answer.

'You are as good-looking as ever you were,' declared Miss Aggles, 'and as hard. If it is any comfort for you to be told so, you are handsomer. You have not got so much colour, and you are somewhat thinner, and father is fond of colour and likes to see women plump; but that is nothing. Any change I notice in your face is for the better. I can't say as much either for your manners or your heart.'

Mrs. Palthorpe did not retort; she only walked on a few steps slowly and thoughtfully, her aunt keeping beside her.

'Anybody but yourself, Mira,' continued Miss Aggles, emboldened perhaps by her niece's silence, 'would have been almost out of her mind with grief. When we feel the death as we do, how you can take it so calmly is past my comprehension. A stranger or a

friend either might think you had never cared for him.'

'I never did.'

'Mira !'

'I never did,' she repeated, in the same even passionless voice in which she had first made the confession. 'If you are shocked, I can't help it. The truth is the truth, and all I cared for, all I wanted, was to be mistress at the Hall. I thought it would be a fine thing to marry a gentleman and sit down a lady ; but my word, if I had known what the end was to turn out, his uncle might have kept him for me. I never thought life up yonder'—and she nodded in the direction of the farm—'particularly delightful ; but it was heavenly, heavenly I tell you, in comparison to my lot in that den at the East-end of London. We wanted for everything ; we did not live half as well as you do here ; we had no money, and we had no friends ; and then, to crown all, there came that accident.'

She had stopped, in order to give more emphasis to her statement, and Miss Aggles stood still also. Now involuntarily she moved a step back from her niece as she said,

'Then you refused to go with him, not because you were expecting your baby to be born, but because—'

'Because,' finished Mrs. Palthorpe, 'I was resolved not to be a slave in Australia as I had been a slave here. We could not agree ; I was not going to work my fingers to the bone for him or anybody else. I did not marry to be a servant and a drudge. I told him exactly what I meant. It was he put the matter upon my condition, though indeed I don't think another man could have been found who would have expected me to go in such circumstances.'

'O poor young man ! O poor, poor fellow !' groaned Miss Aggles.

'I knew you would say that,' sneered Mrs. Palthorpe. 'I would have told you all this long ago, only I felt sure you would take his side. It does not matter now, of course ; only don't come to me asking if I am sorry, for I'm not.'

'And what should you have done, supposing the vessel had brought him safe back ?'

'I can't tell you, for I don't know myself. I would not have gone to Australia with him, however.'

'It was best he went to the bottom,' said Miss Aggles thoughtfully.

'I think so,' acquiesced Mrs. Palthorpe : 'whether he would agree with us or not, is another matter. Shall we go in now ? it is getting chilly.'

'Go in by yourself,' said Miss Aggles. 'I will stay here a minute or two.'

'You think I am not good enough to walk with, I suppose,' conjectured Mrs. Palthorpe. 'As you were so fond of him, it is a pity he did not marry the aunt instead of the niece.'

'I would not talk that way if I were you, Mira ; it is not decent,' remarked Miss Aggles.

With a short laugh Mrs. Palthorpe turned towards the house, leaving Miss Aggles standing by the river's side with the tears running down her cheeks, for the man 'whose heart must have been wrung,' she thought, 'who must have suffered cruelly.'

'I do not think she can be quite in her right mind,' added the honest creature, searching about for some shadow of comfort, some forlorn hope, that might open a way of escape from the ideas that were harassing her. 'She never would have spoken that way un-

less she was out of her head. I must try to bring her to a better frame of mind to-morrow.'

But before the morrow Mrs. Palthorpe herself decided she had made a mistake; and accordingly after breakfast, when she and Miss Aggles were alone, she took the opportunity of trying to eat her words.

'I did not mean all I said last night, aunt,' she began awkwardly enough. 'I can't think what possessed me to speak as I did at all.'

'I am sure neither can I, Mira,' answered Miss Aggles. 'I could not sleep for thinking about what you told me.'

'Try to forget it,' recommended Mrs. Palthorpe.

'I'll try; but such things are not so easily forgotten. I am thankful your grandfather did not hear you. It would have broken his heart.'

'Where is he gone?' asked Mrs. Palthorpe, judiciously changing the topic.

'To Ravensmede,' answered Miss Aggles; 'and he will bring back Rachel with him.'

The widow did not answer, though her aunt's tone suggested that she expected some reply.

Finding none came, however, she went on:

'Mira, you must leave the child with us.'

'If you will keep her, aunt,' answered Mrs. Palthorpe, in a tone which for her was almost gracious. 'After a while I'll see if I can send you something to help pay for what she costs you.'

Miss Aggles looked very thoughtfully at her niece as she answered,

'We don't want any money with the child, but father could not bear to part with her. She is the prettiest little thing, and the dearest, and—O, I am sorry

to see her mother does not care for her one bit.'

'She has never been with me, you know,' said Mrs. Palthorpe, still holding that wonderful restraint over herself which surprised Miss Aggles.

'She was at first, and you did not care for her then,' persisted Miss Aggles. 'But we need not talk of that now. You must leave her here. Such a dear child, such a winsome winning little pet! See her running in with grandfather's slippers; it was that, I think, first made Mrs. Frants take to her. "If you like to give us that precious darling we'll adopt her," she said, the day she took her down to the rectory. "Grandfather couldn't spare her," I answered; and, if you believe me, the little mite spoke up for herself, "Ganfader's tessure," and touched the bosom of her frock to show she meant herself.'

There came a darkness like night over Mrs. Palthorpe's face.

'She is welcome to keep her for me,' she said brusquely. 'What should I do with the child in London?'

'What could you do with a child anywhere, for that matter, Mira?' retorted Miss Aggles. 'And if you often look as you did just now, you will soon lose your beauty, I can tell you!' having discharged which last telling shot the elder woman walked out of the room, too sore and angry to venture upon further remark.

'I think I had better get home, I am not doing much good here,' decided Mrs. Palthorpe. 'I wonder why I came; for no matter how things go, I never could live here again—never, never, never!'

During the afternoon, however, matters went on more smoothly. Miss Aggles discoursed the village news, and Mrs. Palthorpe affected

an interest she did not feel in the terribly short hay-crop and grandfather's many anxieties connected with the farm.

'There is one thing I never told you, Mira,' said Miss Aggles, threading her needle, and considering how best to repair a dilapidated sheet. 'It is of no use trying to patch it. I had better tear it in two and join the sides together in the middle.'

'Was that what you never told me, aunt?' asked Mrs. Palthorpe, her smooth white idle hands folded together in her lap.

'No, of course not. I never told you about that letter which your husband wrote in the autumn.'

'To me?' asked the widow.

'To you?—no. Everything that came for you I sent on. A letter to father—a beautiful letter!—enclosing a hundred pounds as a "small token of gratitude and respect." I will show it to you, if you like.'

'A hundred pounds!' repeated Mrs. Palthorpe. 'What on earth made him do that?'

'He mistook the will for the deed, and thought we had been kind to him in his illness,' answered Miss Aggles dryly. 'But that is a matter between us and him. What I wanted to say to you was that father and I had a talk this morning before you were up, and if you don't see your way clear before you, we will make out that hundred pounds and give it to you. The most of it is banked; but we used some to put to the rent, we were so very short.'

Mrs. Palthorpe hesitated. There was nothing she would have liked better than to take the amount thus offered; but upon second thoughts she decided she had better not do so. There was Rachel; and she never wanted for money—had not known for a long time what it felt like to be short

of a five-pound note, and unable to tell where in all the wide world another might come from.

'Thank you, aunt,' she said; 'but I won't take it from you. I can manage to get along without it.'

'We don't want you to do that,' answered Miss Aggles.

'If I need money I will ask you for it; but I don't think I shall,' compromised Mrs. Palthorpe; then, as she looked dreamily out of the window, she added, 'I hope I sha'n't, at any rate.'

'You find the millinery a pretty good business, I suppose?' hazarded Miss Aggles.

'It is good for the milliners who own the business,' amended Mrs. Palthorpe.

'But you—you are doing very well, aren't you?'

'I don't complain, aunt.'

'You never told me where you were employed.'

'No; where I am to-day I may not be to-morrow.'

'And so you have left your old lodgings?'

'How do you know that?'

'Mr. Murley called once to see you there, but could hear nothing as to where you lived.'

'It was like his impudence.'

'He did not mean it for impudence, Mira. Where are you lodging now?'

'That is my business.'

'If you take it that way, you may keep it to yourself. I shouldn't have thought, however, you would have cared to make a secret of such a simple matter.'

'I don't want all Hampshire coming and calling upon me,' returned Mrs. Palthorpe.

'It is to be hoped you will never get a worse set of folks than the Hampshire about you,' said Miss Aggles.

'That is the comfort of London—that one can be free from the

prying and spying of a lot of idle busybodies,' remarked Mrs. Palthorpe.

'If you are doing no harm, prying and spying, as you call it, can't make harm.'

'No; but they can make one tired of one's life,' declared the widow, with energy.

'O!' said Miss Aggles; and her niece had not courage to ask what the monosyllable thus used meant.

Altogether the visit did not prove a success. Indeed, it was as a whole so great a failure, that when the time came for parting Miss Aggles could only find it in her heart to say,

'I suppose you will run down and see us again before the winter?'

To which Mrs. Palthorpe dutifully replied she did not know how things might be; but she would be sure to spare them two or three days whenever she could conveniently do so.

'And with all my soul I hope I may never find it convenient,' she added to herself. 'With my good will I shall never see Sunnydown again. Sunnydown, indeed! Stormydown, I think, would be a better name for the place.'

Nevertheless the wheat was not reaped when Mrs. Palthorpe appeared at the farm once again. Miss Aggles had not expected her in the least, and was amazed to see her enter the sitting-room.

'How are you, Mira?' said her relative, with a certain heartiness and warmth of welcome; for things had been going well at the farm, and there was every prospect of gracious stacks and overflowing granaries. 'Who would have thought to see you? There is nothing the matter, is there, child?'

'No, aunt.' Mrs. Palthorpe drew a long breath, and looked

about her like a person who, having hurried, meant to rest, and felt the quiet and the shade grateful. 'I have come to tell you something. I am going to be married.'

'Lord bless us and save us!' ejaculated Miss Aggles. It was a pious exclamation; but the tone implied astonishment rather than petition.

'And I want to take Rachel back with me,' continued Mrs. Palthorpe, plunging into the very marrow of her business at once.

'You want to take Rachel back with you?' repeated Miss Aggles, as if doubting the evidence of her sense of hearing.

'Yes.'

'Then you won't,' returned the elder woman. 'That child does not leave this house with you, not if I know it.'

'The child is mine, and I shall take her where I please,' said Mrs. Palthorpe.

'The child is ours by the love and care we have given her, by the love we feel for her; and she sha'n't leave her grandfather's house to go to a stepfather's, to please you or anybody else!'

Mrs. Palthorpe laid one hand wearily upon the table, and stood silent, biting her under-lip.

'Aunt,' she began at last, 'do you think it is any fancy of mine to take her from you? do you think it will be any pleasure to me to have her with me?'

'As to the first, I can't say,' answered Miss Aggles; 'as to the last, you must have changed wonderfully if it would.'

'I do not want her; it is not my wish, it is his entirely; he will have it so.'

'We will see about that,' said Miss Aggles.

'He makes it a stipulation, aunt; he has notions, and he won't marry me unless I have her with us.'

'Then you had better look out for somebody else,' advised Miss Aggles grimly. 'The child does not leave here. She has never been away since she was born, unless for a day now and then to the rectory at Ravelsmede. She has never known another home; we could not part with her, Mira; you would not take away the only bit of sunshine and young life your grandfather has about the place. Why, her laugh is sweeter to him than the lark's song, and he would rather see the little thing running to meet him than get a visit from the Queen.'

Hard though she was, the tears in her aunt's eyes, the trouble in her aunt's voice, touched her. Latterly she had passed over burning ploughshares, and the trial, long protracted, had shaken her strength. It was all right now; she would soon be married, the anxiety over, the uncertainty ended; but the suspense had tried her, mentally and physically, and so she answered more gently than might have been expected,

'It is not my doing; of my own free will I would never take her from you.'

'If I was giving her up to you, it would be hard enough,' continued Miss Aggles; 'but to hand her over to a man, a stranger I have never seen and that I hope I never may see, a man who could make love to a widow who was a wife not four months ago, who could ask you to marry him beside your husband's grave as one may say, and tempt you to throw off your mourning almost before you had time to get it on! No, no, Mira; the child does not go to such as him. How can I tell what he would do with her—what he would make her? He might sell her, for aught I could tell, or make her go upon the tight rope. I once saw a

child not a year older at that work. I couldn't do it; no, I couldn't, couldn't, was it ever so.'

'He would be good to her, aunt, I know he would.'

'How can you tell? and if he wasn't, you wouldn't stand between them to save her. Let the child bide where she is. If he wants children, aren't there enough in London for him to pick and choose, without taking our ewe-lamb?'

'Don't fret yourself about it; I'll think what I can do. I am going out into the orchard for a while.'

'Very well; but you needn't think I am going to part with the child, for I am not.'

'I have told you before, I do not want you to part from her if it can be helped.'

'It must be helped, so that is all about it,' answered Miss Aggles, taking up her knitting in hands which were all of a tremble, and trying to count the stitches with eyes that were full of tears.

At that moment the farmer came up to one of the open windows.

'Wasn't that Miry I saw going through the wicket-gate, Jane?' he asked.

'Yes, she has just come.'

'I couldn't believe but my eyes were playing me false. What's wrong?' he suddenly added, catching sight of the marks of trouble in his daughter's face. 'What has brought Miry down so soon again?'

'Mira is going to be married, and her husband that's to be, she says, wants to take the child.'

'What, little Rachel!'

'Yes, our Rachel.'

'The woman must be mad,' said Mr. Aggles, with conviction, 'stark staring mad; there's no man going to take the child from us.'

'So I told her.'

'And so I will tell her. A likely thing indeed, part with the child

to a stranger, to have her perhaps made into a painted Jezebel like Mira's own mother !

'You won't say that to her, I suppose.'

'Well, then, let her say nothing to me about Rachel. Going to be married, is she ? and her first husband only just dead, in a manner of speaking. She had better keep him away from here, or I may give them both a bit of my mind they won't like. Such ways may be London ways, but they will not do in Hampshire.'

'If she has set her mind on marrying, nothing we can say or do will prevent her,' remarks Miss Aggles philosophically.

'Some poor creature of a counter-hopper, no doubt,' conjectured the farmer, who had a bucolic hatred for what he called 'London smirking ninnies.' 'She must have known him some time ; they couldn't make a match up just in a minute, so to say, if they had been total strangers.'

'That is exactly what I have been thinking, father.'

'Well, they don't take Rachel from us, they may make their minds quite sure on that subject.'

'I tell you, aunt, what I have been thinking,' said Mrs. Palthorpe, when, a couple of hours later, she met Miss Aggles coming into the orchard to say tea was ready. 'If you will write a note putting in the words and thoughts you spoke to me, I think he would be satisfied. All he wants is to feel sure the child is well done by.'

Miss Aggles gave an incredulous sniff.

'You may believe me or not—' began Mrs. Palthorpe angrily.

'Thank you,' interrupted her aunt ; 'as you give me the choice, I won't.'

'But what I am saying is perfectly true.'

'He must be an extraordinary sort of person,' commented Miss Aggles. 'Men are not usually so thoughtful about other men's children, or so anxious to have them in the house.'

'I won't argue with you, aunt,' said Mrs. Palthorpe, with unwonted meekness. 'If you write me the letter, I will go away and give you no more trouble about the matter, if I can help it.'

'I will think about it,' answered Miss Aggles ; 'you don't want it to-night, I suppose ?'

'No ; any time to-morrow.'

'How long are you going to stay with us ?'

'Till Thursday, if I shall not be putting you out.'

Miss Aggles looked at her niece in amazement.

'Are not you well, Mira ?' she asked.

'Quite well, aunt, thank you, except that I feel a little tired. Why do you ask ?'

'Because you don't seem like yourself.'

'You would be fonder of me, I suppose, if I never was like myself,' returned Mrs. Palthorpe.

Miss Aggles did not answer ; she was walking slowly beside her niece under the shadow of trees literally laden with fruit ; the orchard at Sunnydown was a noted one in the county.

'Who is this man you are going to marry ?' she at length broke the silence by inquiring.

'He—he's in business,' Mrs. Palthorpe replied.

'Have you known him long ?'

'Some little time.'

'Is he well off ?'

'He is not poor ; he has saved money.'

'What is his name ?'

'There is no use in asking such a lot of questions !' broke out Mrs. Palthorpe petulantly. 'What can it signify to you what he is, or

who he is? Likely as not we may never be married.'

'Do you think you are fond of him, Mira?' asked Miss Aggles; but her niece did not reply. She moved on in silence, her eyes cast down, her face paler than its wont, her long black dress trailing over the grass in the orchard, a different woman from the restless creature who had paced up and down beside the river.

'Because if you are not,' continued Miss Aggles, 'don't take him; no matter what he is, or what he has. Such as it is, there is a home always for you here if you want one, and—'

'Grandfather is calling to us,' exclaimed Mrs. Palthorpe, with an expression of relief; and then she hurriedly added,

'Aunt, I am going to marry him; so we need not talk any more about that matter.'

CHAPTER XVI.

LOST.

MISS AGGLES wrote the required letter. It was not addressed, however, to the vague future husband; for the straightforward spinster firmly declined to have any dealings, direct or indirect, with an unknown and nameless stranger, who might, as she expressed her opinions, 'be anybody.'

'I will put my determination on paper, if you like, Mira,' she said. 'I will tell you in black and white that I won't let the child go, and I will tell you why; and if he wants to know more he can write to me himself, or come and see me if he likes.'

'I don't think he will want to know more,' answered Mrs. Palthorpe; and there is no doubt she really did at the time believe her aunt's honest language and strong

expressions of attachment for the fatherless child would plead her excuse when she returned unsuccessful from her embassy. 'She will be far better where she is, too,' she decided, referring to Rachel. 'It is all nonsense his talking of bringing her up as if she was his own daughter.'

'We sha'n't see much of you now, I suppose?' remarked Miss Aggles the night before her niece's departure, as they paused for a moment at the top of the easy old-fashioned staircase, up and down which so many of the family had been carried in infancy, and borne not less tenderly to their long home.

'I will come whenever I can,' answered Mrs. Palthorpe; but though she spoke earnestly and as if she meant what she said, she knew perfectly well she never intended to enter the place again if things went as she hoped they would do.

It was the last night she should ever sleep in the room she had occupied when a girl. When she turned her back on the farm next day she should never see it more; she should not stroll again beside the river, or walk in the orchard and pluck the Jeannetton apples that were such a lovely sight just then on the trees, or look in the moonlight up the hill, thinking of what might have been, or listen to the doves cooing in the woods and the corncrake in the meadows, watch the milkers with their pails, and hear between sleeping and waking in the dewy hours of the summer mornings the sound of the mowers sharpening their scythes and the swish-swish of the falling grass.

All old things she intended to cast behind her when she commenced leading a new life, one in which her position as a wife and mistress of a household would be

recognised—when she would have done with doubt and fear and be able to speak freely, without the dread that had latterly oppressed her, dogging every word she said.

When she thought of the assured future before her, of the termination of suspense, of the certainty that she would be well provided for, she felt glad; and yet not to feel a little sorry at the idea of never seeing the old place again, she must have been less human than was the case.

For, even granting she did not care for any creature living there—and, indeed, she cared but little for any creature living anywhere save herself—the things she was actually bidding farewell to were so fully part and parcel of her youth, that in saying good-bye to them she could not help feeling she was leaving behind many pleasant things which might meet her again on her way through life nevermore.

Her girlhood, the hopes and dreams it held, the freshness of her early beauty, her freedom, her innocence. Through the old-fashioned house she had played, as Rachel played now; the orchard had been to her as the Garden of Eden, about which her grandfather talked often as they walked beside the river; she had made chains of daisies and dandelions sitting in the shade under the chestnut-trees; there was a swampy place in the water-meadows where she found rushes to make into parasols and butterfly-cages and swords; there was not a hedge about the farm she had not searched for birds'-nests, not a corner of the squire's plantations she had not traversed looking for peahens' eggs.

It all came back to her as she lay that night in bed, the wind softly rustling through the open windows, the stars shining in upon

her just as they used to do. Her heart was not softened, but it was sad; the loneliness of the silent country oppressed her, the solemnity of night troubled her. She could not sleep for thinking of the past and the future, wondering what the farm would be like when her grandfather died, marvelling about the changes time might produce in herself.

And she had never thought so much in all the years since he left England of her dead husband as she did that night.

'After all it was hard for him,' she thought, for the first time a feeling of pity stirring her soul. 'It was hard for him to lose that fine place, and then his health, and then his life.'

'Then his life,' the silent voices of the night seemed, in some dumb fashion, to repeat.

Some day she would have to lose her life, and lie still and quiet. Well, she hoped before it came to that she might be able to take a great deal of enjoyment out of existence.

'Of course we must all die some time,' she thought, getting up and looking out of the window at the fair landscape, half-shrouded by night's shadows, lying stretched below. 'Some go soon, and some go late;' and then, having quite decided that she would go late, that nothing ever was amiss with her, that she would live as long as her grandfather, or longer, she once more sought her pillow, and soon fell fast asleep.

She was awakened by the morning sun streaming into the room, by the voices of the reapers as they came up the lane, by the song of a thrush perched on the topmost branch of a tree near her window, by the trillings of the larks away down in the meadows, and the twittering of a hundred sparrows chattering all together

on the roof. Looking out between the leaves which clustered over the window, she could see the winding river, the rich pasture-lands, the spreading corn-fields she meant never to behold more.

Rising, she dressed herself hurriedly; and going softly downstairs, opened the front door and went out into the sunshine.

'I will walk up to the hill,' she said; 'likely I shall never look on it again.'

She climbed the hill, and sauntered through the plantations. The dew lay wet on the grass, and glittered as though millions of diamonds had been scattered broadcast over the land. There were peacocks still in the grounds spreading their magnificent tails to the sun. She made her way to a yew-hedge cut into all manner of fantastic shapes, which sheltered what had always been called 'Madam's flower-garden' from the easterly winds, a pleasant sheltered nook lying underneath some of the side-windows of the Hall. Through one of the green archways formed in the yew-hedge the wanderer, who thought to have been mistress there, stood and looked at the house. As she looked the memory of the bygone returned and dwelt with her: the dreams she had dreamt, the castles she had built, the fancies she had woven, the scenes she had pictured, they all came round her, each with its familiar face and remembered associations.

With a deep sigh she turned away, the smell of the heliotrope floating in the air after her, the yellow roses still peeping at her over the hedges as she passed along, the scent of sweetbrier grateful to the senses, passion-flowers climbing with the roses.

'Ah, it was a pretty place,'

she said, as though the place, like the hopes she had cherished, were gone; 'a pretty place. I don't know that I ever thought so much of it before.'

She wandered through all the winding walks up to the very top of the hill, where she had stood so many and many a time with him watching the white sails of the ships in the distance; and then she slowly retraced her steps, and walked a little along the lane, which led from Sunnydown Farm into the main road to Ravensmede.

As she paused by the gate for a moment on her return, dreamily looking up into the elder-bushes and the acacia-trees that sheltered it, the postman came by. He was early afoot, as most postmen have to be in the country, and, being an old inhabitant, he had of course known Mrs. Palthorpe from a child.

'Anything for the farm?' she asked, stretching out her hand.

'Only one,' he answered, giving the letter to her.

Then he went rapidly on his way; but she stood still.

Going into the great kitchen in the farmhouse some ten minutes later, Miss Aggles was surprised to find her niece standing beside the fire. There chanced to be no one else in the kitchen—the cook had crossed over to the dairy and the housemaid was laying the breakfast-cloth in the parlour. Mrs. Palthorpe had the place to herself, and she was, poker in hand, holding something down amongst the coals, and watching the blaze as it flared into powder.

'I did not know you were up, Mira,' said Miss Aggles.

Still holding down that something, which was now little save dust and ashes, Mrs. Palthorpe turned towards the speaker.

'Lord bless me, what is the

matter?' cried Miss Aggles. 'Mira, what is wrong with you?'

But Mrs. Palthorpe did not answer. She only gave the poker an extra push, carefully raked the glowing coals over the something they had consumed, flattened the surface of the fire with a curious deliberation, and then stood shivering like one stricken by an attack of ague.

'Are you ill, Mira?' asked her aunt.

'Yes, I think so;' and the voice which answered did not sound like Mrs. Palthorpe's. 'I'll go up-stairs, aunt, if you please.'

Miss Aggles only waited to call the housemaid, and hurried after; but quick though she might be, Mrs. Palthorpe had been quicker. She had managed to hurry up the stairs, to reach the familiar apartment, to cross the floor, to throw herself into the great armchair which stood beside the bed, and then she fell into a dead faint.

At the sight, Miss Aggles' tenderness was all aroused. 'My poor girl, my dear Mira!' she murmured, as she threw water over the white frightened face, and held salts to her nostrils, and unfastened her dress and rubbed her hands. 'What is the matter? what can have happened?' she thought; and then all in a moment there came a horrified pause in her ejaculations, a pause during which she hastily shut and locked the door, and pressed her hands over her eyes, and stood still and silent, trying to realise that which she dreaded.

After a short time Mrs. Palthorpe recovered sufficiently to understand where she was and what had happened.

'I fainted, aunt, I think,' she said.

'Yes,' answered Miss Aggles, with a terrible brevity.

'Did I say anything?'

'Not that I heard.'

'That anybody heard?' persisted Mrs. Palthorpe, with painful earnestness.

'There was nobody to hear,' said her aunt.

For a minute there ensued silence; then Mrs. Palthorpe began to speak again.

'Isn't breakfast ready?'

'I daresay it is.'

'I wish you would go down to it, then, and never mind me. I am all right now, and I would rather be alone.'

'Just as you like,' replied Miss Aggles. 'Shall I bring you up anything?'

'Send me a cup of tea, please,' said Mrs. Palthorpe, struggling into an upright position, and looking about her with dazed wild eyes that had as yet no faculty of settled observation in them; 'that is all I want.'

'Very well,' having uttered which brief remark, Miss Aggles moved to the door. Before she opened it, however, she came back again, and said, 'God help you, Mira,' as though the words were wrung out of her.

'God help me, indeed!' repeated Mrs. Palthorpe excitedly; 'if you knew everything you might say that with more meaning.'

'Won't he marry you, then?' asked Miss Aggles curiously.

'He—who?' cried Mrs. Palthorpe. 'O, I expect so; I hope he will.'

'And so do I,' said her aunt. 'Now we won't talk about it any more at present. Keep yourself quite quiet, and I will bring you up some tea.'

'O me!' groaned Mrs. Palthorpe, laying her head wearily against the back of the chair. 'O dear, dear me!'

She had her tea and a slice of thin bread-and-butter with it, and then, contrary to custom, for she

was by nature a restless creature, she remained sitting quietly for a couple of hours, crushed apparently by the weight of some heavy blow.

'You will not think of going back to London to-day, Mira,' Miss Aggles had said when she took the breakfast-tray up to her niece; and for answer Mrs. Palthorpe said wearily, 'Thank you, aunt.'

Towards midday, shaking off the weakness which had overpowered her, she rose, and after laving her face and hands, and bathing her head till her hair was soaked with wet, put on her bonnet and a light shawl, and proceeding down-stairs, told her aunt she thought of going for a little walk.

'The air will do me good,' she said.

'Keep under the shade of the trees, then,' advised Miss Aggles, 'for the sun is very powerful.'

'Don't wait dinner for me,' went on Mrs. Palthorpe; 'I could not eat anything.'

'You can have a morsel when you come in,' said Miss Aggles; 'there is some trout Betty shall cook for you if you could fancy that.'

'Thank you, aunt.' Mrs. Palthorpe was strangely subdued and quiet.

'And, Mira, if there is aught it would be an ease to your mind to tell me, don't be afraid to speak.' Miss Aggles pretended to be looking in her work-basket for a needle as she said this, and did not even glance at her niece.

'You are very good,' Mrs. Palthorpe answered; but she did not add that she had a weight on her mind, or that if there were she meant to tell it.

She went slowly out of the room, turning at the door to give one wistful look around it; she

trod the oaken floor of the hall and crossed the threshold once so familiar; she passed through the orchard, where the Jeannetton apples had gathered a richer colour since the previous day, and walked straight to the field where her grandfather stood watching the labours of the reapers, who that morning had come up the lane talking cheerily in the early sunshine as they strode onward to their work.

It seemed to her as though years instead of hours had passed since she heard their voices. Life had changed for her totally, completely, since she listened to the song of the thrushes and the matins of the larks. It could not be that it was only that morning she had walked up to the Hall, and stood looking at the peacocks and Madam's flower-garden, and the closed blinds in the bedrooms, when no one was awake.

In the fields they were reaping the rich brown grain; the seed she had scattered she was yet to farm. Dreamily she went on, dreamily, yet with the step of one who is going forward to an end determined upon previously.

'Are you better, Miry?' asked her grandfather, coming to meet her with an anxious look on his furrowed face. 'Yourauntsaid you had been taken with a faintness.'

'I am better, grandfather,' she answered, still with that unaccustomed gentleness influencing voice and manner. 'It was the heat, I suppose.'

'You don't look strong, as you used to do,' said the old man, with a jealous ring in his voice. 'You have lost your colour and your spirits. Ah, they may talk as they like about London, but there is no air like Hampshire air.'

'There is not, indeed, grandfather,' she answered, humouring his fancy.

'You are not going to leave us to-day, are you, my dear?' asked the farmer, feeling that perhaps when she belonged to the strange unknown man who, as Miss Aggles declared, might be anybody, they would have less share in her than ever.

'Aunt kindly said I might stop,' she hesitated.

'Said you might stop! Don't talk that way, Miry; you know you have been always welcome here to come and stay as long as you liked, and for that matter to stay altogether; and you will be welcome still—yes, still, though I do think you might have kept on your black a while longer for the man as lost everything through you.'

'Don't, grandfather; please don't!'

'Well, I won't, then, my girl; only don't you talk that way about being let stop and suchlike. Stop altogether would be best; but there, I must not say any more, I suppose.'

She touched his hard brown hand for an instant, and then, after speaking about other matters for a few minutes, walked slowly away.

She did not return to dinner; but then she had said she should not do so.

The afternoon passed by, the long sultry afternoon with clouds coming up betokening a thunder-storm. Tea-time arrived; still no Mira.

'I wonder where she can have gone,' marvelled Miss Aggles musingly.

'I suppose she hasn't taken the notion and flown off all of a sudden,' suggested the farmer.

'She would not do that,' said his daughter positively; and yet when tea was over she went up-stairs to see if her niece's belongings were still there.

Yes, still there; her little bag, her cloak, her umbrella, her brush and comb, her night-clothing.

'I wonder where she is,' thought Miss Aggles.

Shortly afterwards, having occasion to go to the desk where all her papers and accounts were kept, she chanced to notice, first, that the letter written at Mrs. Palthorpe's request, and which had been left sealed up just inside the top division, was missing; and second, that another letter that had come to the farm for Mr. Palthorpe, and which of course had never been delivered to him, was absent also.

Miss Aggles looked carefully for both, but could not find them.

'It is not once in six months I leave the key in the lock,' she considered meditatively; 'but I did leave the desk open to anybody to-day.' She went up-stairs again and looked in Mrs. Palthorpe's bag; the letters were not there. Then she put on her bonnet, and saying to her father, 'I am going down to Ravelmede, and I will call and bring Rachel back with me,' set out along the dusty road.

It was a birthday of one of the children at the rectory, and Rachel had been asked to join in the festivities.

Miss Aggles walked fast, and ere half an hour appeared at the rectory door.

'I have come for Miss Rachel,' she said to the servant who opened the door.

'She went home long ago, miss,' answered the man. 'Her ma came and fetched her before luncheon.'

Miss Aggles fell back against one of the pillars supporting the verandah.

'There must be some mistake,' she was beginning, all of a tremble, when good Mr. Frants sud-

denly appeared and drew her into the library.

'Don't keep me, I must go,' she implored; but he soothed her, and she told him what she feared.

All that evening, and all the next day, they searched for traces of Mrs. Palthorpe and her child. They telegraphed to London; they put the matter in the hands of the police; they offered rewards; but all in vain. If the mother and daughter had vanished off the face of the earth they could not have disappeared more completely.

Most of the money put aside so carefully in the bank was spent in prosecuting the fruitless search; and, a goodly sum for people so situated, fifty pounds was at length, through the columns of the *Times*, offered to 'any one who should give such information,' &c.

This elicited a response.

A few lines arrived from Mrs. Palthorpe, telling them the child was well and happy; and the letter bore the postmark of a town in a foreign country very far away.

'I'll never see her more, then,' sobbed the poor old farmer when he heard the words read out; 'never. The little lass that was always at my heels like a dog, and had her father's honest blue eyes, and was the last of the old stock, and brought me my slippers, and said she was "ganfader's tressure"—I'll never see her more.'

He was right; till they meet in The Kingdom he will never see the 'little lass,' grown to womanhood, again.

description. People who did not know the Moffats in the least, who were never likely to know them, talked concerning the new tenants as though the occupancy of Holyrood House were certain to prove a matter of considerable importance to the speakers.

Given that a man in London be rich enough or notorious enough, and it is a mistake to suppose his outgoings and his incomings are regarded with no curiosity by his neighbours. Why, not only one half of all the idle folks living round and about the neighbourhood of Palace Gardens, but more than half of all the busy householders also, had something to say on the subject. Shopkeepers stood on the tip-toe of expectation. To serve such a family, say with prime joints; to wait upon them for orders; to send in groceries and butter and cheese and vegetables, would be delightful occupations. Saddlers considered how much they would tip the coachman; plumbers left their cards with a hopeful eye to severe winters and hard frosts. Corn-dealers wondered whether Sir John would patronise local tradesmen, or whether he had his oats direct from Mark-lane. Even undertakers sent circulars embellished and illustrated in a ghastly manner; and a man in the statuary way of business enclosed a descriptive pamphlet containing designs of every sort of hideous monument that could be erected to the memory of any dear departed.

These various tributes of respect and evidences of confidence in his solvency accumulated upon the marble slab in Sir John's hall, as orders to view had formerly done. Finally there came a day when they too were swept into the dust-heap, to make way for cards of a different description, which fell

CHAPTER XVII.

AFTER LONG YEARS.

EMPTY no longer. The house in Palace Gardens became all at once the scene of frantic activity, a field for speculation of every

upon Holyrood House thick as hail. Many 'desirable' people had visited the Seatons; but many more were desirous of visiting the Moffata. If a man wanted to hide his light under a bushel, Palace Gardens was a bad place to select for the operation; and the house in the locality that Sir John Moffat had bought the worst he could have chosen with a view to isolation.

A mansion attached to which is 'a story' should never be purchased by a man solicitous of privacy. Some portion of the notoriety compassed by his predecessors is sure to descend to him; and ere long this retiring unobtrusive gentleman found that a large amount of notoriety had been, so to speak, capitalised about the place, and the interest accumulated for him. Further, in a great town, where a plain Mister may be anybody, a Sir—even if he be only a knight—is regarded by the outside world as somebody.

There were many people—hundreds, thousands—who thought even a vague Sir John a very great person indeed; how much greater, then, did he seem when it was known he had actually bought the house Mr. Seaton had decamped from! that he had money to buy it, money to furnish it, money to keep it up as 'such an establishment ought to be kept,' to quote the words of one of the 'purveyors' who rushed to deliver cards!

Such a parading in and out of workpeople, such measuring, such critical contemplation on the part of the British artisan, such a running to and fro of a boy from the nearest public, such rearing of ladders and wheeling in of hand-carts, and hurried visits on the parts of master tradesmen, such an invasion of all the rooms, such

smoking in solemn conclave when the heat and burden of a couple of hours' work had grown beyond endurance to the skilled labourers, who, if their own account might be trusted, were only too conscientious as regards their time.

It was, indeed, a sight to behold them at the breakfast-hour. When the clock began to strike the tools were laid down as though work had been arrested by the wand of a magician; and ere the last stroke of eight died away not a man was left on the premises save one, who elected to warm his tea over a fire in the library.

'Nothing could exceed,' we are told, 'the speed with which Paddy-go-easy went to his meals, except the reluctance with which he returned from them;' and the same remark applies to the 'three-branch' and other 'hands' who were employed in the renovation of Holyrood House.

'Ah!' said Mrs. Hemans, looking in at the gate on one occasion when a body of workmen were sauntering leisurely up the drive, 'ah!' and the old lady shook her head solemnly.

No doubt she thought the place had been 'more like a place' while it stood dark and empty and silent, and she was 'in residence.'

There were others who said 'Ah!' and added other remarks to that exclamation.

Old ladies of Conservative tendencies, who wondered why 'City people' did not 'live over their shops;' smart clerks, who lodged in less desirable neighbourhoods than Palace Gardens, but who still put themselves to an enormous amount of inconvenience in order to be able to head their notepaper with a grand address, stopped on Sunday afternoons to look at the residence, and wondered audibly 'how long that would last.'

There was the man of modest tastes, who, in a shockingly bad hat and shabby coat and frayed collar and trousers carefully turned up, said,

'That is not the sort of house I would have taken had I been Sir John Moffat. A nice place up the river, now, with a boat-house and lawn sloping to the water's edge—that style of thing, eh?'

There were the envious of all ranks and classes and parties, who thought things were very unfairly distributed. 'Let parsons say what they like, why should one man be able to buy a house in Palace Gardens, and another live in dread of his life because of the coming man in possession in Angelica-terrace, though he only stood at eight-and-twenty, and precious dear for all he got for the money, too?'

There were the cynical, who fancied Sir John had made a mistake if he thought the mere fact of living in Palace Gardens would pass him free into 'society,' meaning theirs; but, as a rule, it was felt that if a City man must live in Palace Gardens, a better than Sir John Moffat could not be found.

'He is more than a merchant prince, my dear,' said one lady effusively. 'He is a philanthropist.'

'And might have been a baronet,' capped her friend, in a tone which implied she considered that would have been much better.

It is a remarkable fact that, no matter how admirable the order in which a house may be when vacated, the incoming occupant always finds it necessary to put the place in substantial and ornamental repair from garret to cellar.

The Compulsory Act, under which these operations have to be

performed, seems to imply a promise to the victim that any further outlay and trouble will thus be avoided after he is once in occupation. It is a vain delusion, and perhaps Sir John knew this when he positively refused to allow the master spirits, whose aid had been invoked, to work their sweet will on every apartment in the house.

What they desired was totally to destroy, and then cheerfully to create. In a light and airy manner they sketched out a plot, and assured him of their capability to fill in. Nothing about the place met with their approval. If they could have been permitted to pull down and rebuild the mansion, they would have been perfectly happy; but as matters stood they could do a great deal—they could so improve Holyrood House, that if Sir John wished to sell again he could get double the money he had paid for it. Precisely the same remark was made to Mr. Seaton when he took counsel with similar ministering angels.

'You'll repent it, Sir John,' said one enthusiastic individual, who had been revelling in parquet and frescoes and marbles, and rolling and unrolling some of the most hideous paper-hangings that were ever evolved out of the inner consciousness of perverted taste. 'You'll excuse me saying so; but you might reproach me in your own mind hereafter if, being accustomed to such matters, I did not give you warning now. This sort of thing'—and he contemptuously indicated the barbaric decorations of the room in which they happened to be standing at the moment—'was very well in its way, no doubt, thought very fine once; but it won't do for you, Sir John; it won't, indeed!'

'It did for Mr. Seaton, and it will do for me,' answered Sir

John mildly, but decidedly. 'It is not my intention to spend all the money I possess in remodelling the house, and we will therefore leave these rooms'—and he touched a list lying on the chimneypiece—'as they are. You will take your instructions from Lady Moffat concerning the drawing-room.'

And having so spoken, he walked slowly across the hall and down into the garden, from which point he contemplated the yews and oaks in Kensington, as though they were the finest prospect in the world.

'I never did—there, I never see a gentleman throw less heart into a place than Sir John throws into this!' remarked the master tradesman to his second in command.

'Not a bit of life about him. Holyrood House might be a cabin for all the interest he takes in beautifying it, or a pigsty for that matter,' was the appreciative reply.

'I call it mean almost,' said the principal.

'I call it mean altogether,' improved the subordinate. 'It is downright disheartening, that's what it is!'

'And we could have worked in that lot of papers to advantage,' sighed his chief.

'We must try and get in some of them,' said his echo. 'Whatever can he see in that garden to moon about it as he does?'

'Not a lawn-party, with the Queen and Prince of Wales walking over in a friendly way from the Princess of Teck's, I should imagine,' said the disappointed tradesman, with cutting irony, that his satellite applauded with a laugh.

But if Sir John failed to gratify pecuniary speculation and upset commercial calculation, what was to be said about Lady Moffat?

Well, only this—that, whilst gratifying the thirst for destruction exhibited by those who had a direct interest in destroying the labours of others, she vexed the souls of the men with whom she came in contact by offending their æsthetic tastes.

Whatever chanced to be the fashion seemed to them high art; and as the things Lady Moffat admired were of the loudest and showiest description, it may be imagined how her ideas jarred at every turn against the notions of the severe, subdued, and sad-toned school, which at that period was teaching the beauty of dark rooms and dingy hangings and uncomfortable furniture to a people whose lot is cast in a land where everything is dark enough and dingy enough and uncomfortable enough by reason of the climate, without the assistance of art being called in to make life drearier still.

It is perfectly true that her ladyship's views, when expounded, made her hearer shiver; and indeed the mirrors—the gilding, the white enamel, and the various items to match might have induced a chill in the marrow of any bystander.

Lady Moffat had once, in the house of a certain Mrs. Kenley, seen a drawing-room decorated and furnished in a manner which met with her approval, and she was now determined to what she called 'follow out her fancy.'

No one could accuse her of indifference about Holyrood House. She neither rested herself nor let any other person rest till the repairs were accomplished, and the residence at Carlton Hill vacated. She came in her carriage, not on foot, as was Sir John's modest habit, to urge the workmen on.

She wore out the foreman's patience with her constant petition for him to 'finish,' 'finish,' 'finish!'

'Men can't do more than they can, your ladyship,' he once ventured to hint.

'Then get more men,' she returned, and 'fell,' as one of the skilled labourers declared, 'to pacing up and down that terrace as though she meant to wear it out.' 'She's a termagant, I'll be bound,' he finished; 'I shouldn't care to be in his shoes, though she had a purse, they do say, as long as his own.'

Guessing who she had been, do you wonder if, as she paced that terrace, her thoughts ever recurred to a path she had traversed in the days so long ago departed?

If you do, it might be answered that she never thought of those days, save with contempt and irritation. Time had done wonders for her: it had almost enabled her to forget the sudden blow that struck her with a force and cruelty for which death had then seemed mercy. In every respect, save in temper and in heart, it had changed her completely—her voice had altered, her accent improved, her manners become to a certain extent conventional. She had read that she need not seem a perfect ignoramus, improved her book-lore so that her own children might not put her to shame. She was quick, and had caught up a certain jargon which served the purpose of conversation well enough. She pretended to take an interest in many things for which she did not care one straw. She could talk just like the bulk of women, and she was able to comport herself like anybody else. The usages of society came now familiar to her; etiquette she could discourse concerning as glibly as most people. Her temper passed current for spirit, and her imperious manner was attributed to pride.

Pride! Sir John smiled quietly

when this quality chanced to be mentioned in his presence in connection with his wife. He was humble enough; any small measure of happiness he ever conceived possible could only, he felt, have been compassed in some lowly valley; and yet there he was, against his own inclinations, set high upon a hill.

People talk about greatness being thrust upon a man. Sir John knew the fallacy of such a statement, if it meant not having to be paid for.

'As shopkeepers,' he said once simply, 'press a silk or velvet upon a woman, and eventually charge it high in her bill, so, whenever Fate makes a man famous or rich or renowned, she takes good care to enter the transaction in her ledger, and makes him eventually settle the demand, though it takes the last halfpenny he possesses.'

Greatness had been thrust upon Sir John, so he knew. Holyrood House was part of the penalty—certainly the last residence he would have thought of buying; Palace Gardens the last place in which he would have thought of living.

When he saw his wife sweeping through the rooms, rustling along the corridors, and coming down the stairs, he looked at her sometimes with a startled and terrible surprise.

How could she forget? If she had no heart—of which great lack in her mental organisation he was aware, and no conscience, a generally considered necessary that had been entirely overlooked in her organisation—had she no memory?

Was the past wiped so completely out of her recollection, that it left no mark, no lines even half erased? She knew what had been; she knew what *she* had been. She could not fail to remember all she had forsaken, all

she had trampled under foot. Two thousand years would not have sufficed to wear the traces of his sin out of his weary heart; and yet she voluntarily rushed into everything which caused the iron to enter more deeply into his own soul, and chafed the old unhealed wounds that lay hidden under the outward habiliments he wore.

'Beware of the first lie,' he was wont to say kindly sometimes to youths he was starting in the world.

'Beware of the first lie:' out of his own experience he had gathered this wisdom. 'It may be afterwards,' he thought, 'a man will never find himself able to speak the honest truth again. If I had that morning in July, twenty-one long years ago, spoken the simple truth, instead of suppressing part of it, my life might have been different, I think. John Hay, John Hay Moffat: it was a simple matter to involve such consequences. John Hay could do what John Hay Moffat could not and would not have done; that is the rock on which the whole of my later life came to grief. Such a trifling falsehood too, it seemed, and uttered with no ill intent. Well, well; a small leak, that the tip of a child's finger might stop at first, will eventually serve to sink a ship.'

It was such things he often considered, observed by the workmen, looking at the dwarf oaks and dark yews in Kensington Gardens standing black and solitary against the sky. A quiet man, with reserved manners, who did not talk much, and who never thrust himself forward—a 'retiring thoughtful sort of person,' ladies decided. He was not a favourite with the sex.

As a rule it is, we know, the large, bold, swaggering, loud-voiced, pushing specimens of male

humanity that, in all ranks, women most delight to honour. Tenderness, sensitiveness, refinement of mind and expression, a deep-seated sense of unworthiness, an earnest desire to walk through life led by an unseen guide who leads along a path often sharp with stones, frequently beset with briers, is not the type of masculine excellence which finds favour in the eyes of beauty. A very 'plain man,' said many ladies, thinking of the more florid style which had captivated their young imaginations; and Lady Moffat would have agreed with their finding, if this verdict had been delivered in her presence.

Nature is perfectly well aware what she is about, and knows the men who beat their wives, and assert their supremacy by other such acts, simply supply a want. A man who beat her might have won some respect from Lady Moffat; but the man who tried to do his duty towards her she cordially disliked. With the ball at his feet, she did not understand why he could not be induced to take advantage of every so-called happiness the world offered. That he had never ceased to reproach himself, she was well aware; that the image of the man over whom the waters had closed in merciful oblivion was never long absent from his thoughts, she understood as well as he did; but the knowledge only made her angry.

'Moaning and fretting about what can't be undone,' she thought; 'such nonsense and folly!'

And to her it seemed such, indeed; for she had no comprehension that it was the very sense of inability to repair the evil he had wrought—the very consciousness that, though life was all before him to repent, the power of atonement lay with him no longer—

which infused the bitterest drop into the cup he had to drain.

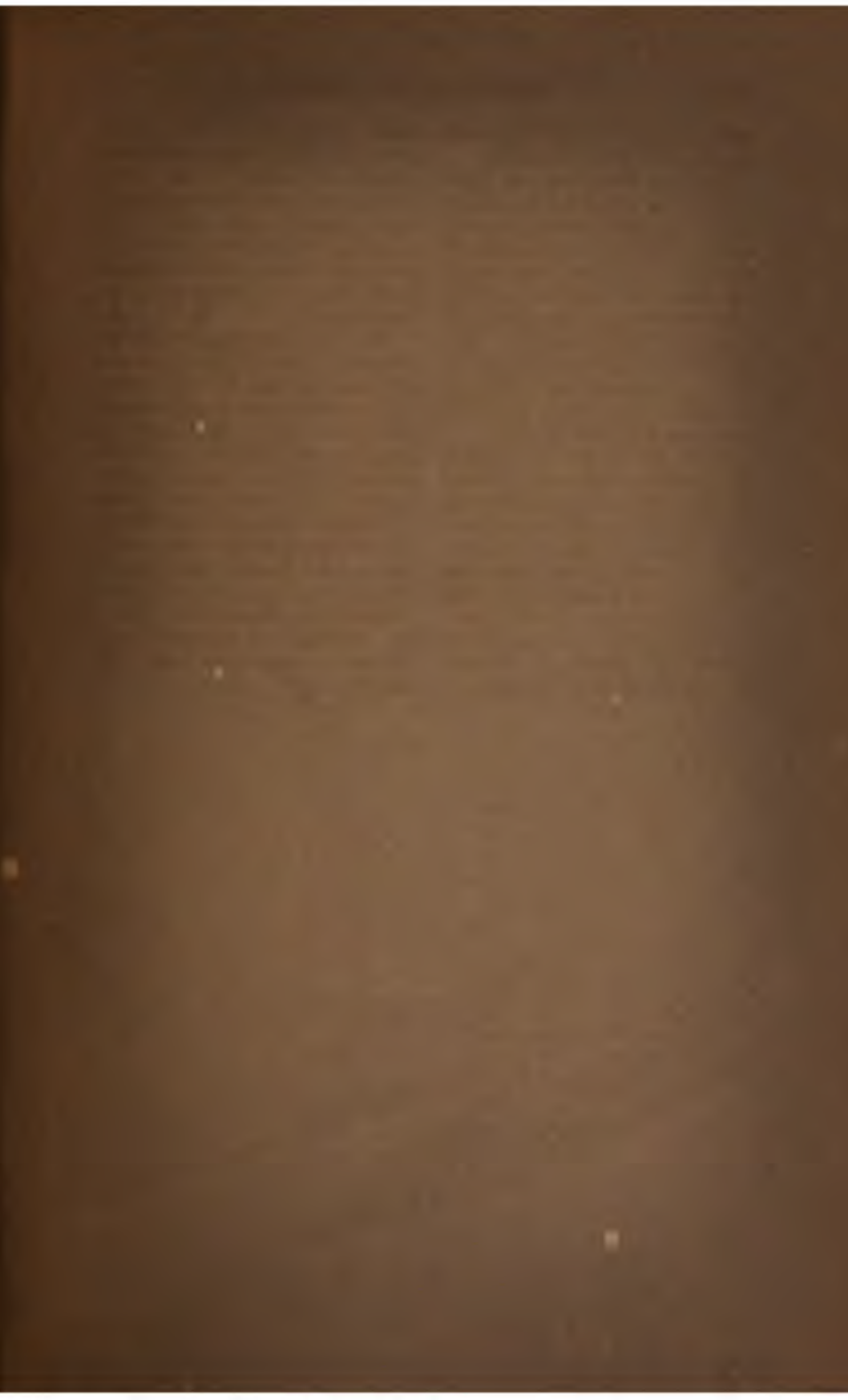
For him there was no pleasure in the sunshine, or melody in song; no gladness in the spring-time, or daylight in the glories of summer. As a sick man might look on a fair landscape, so he, with tired soul, regarded the exceeding beauty of earth. Fair to others it might be, but as for him he fancied its loveliness throughout the years to come would be spread all in vain.

From society he shrank with the morbid sensitiveness of a man conscious of a concealed sore and dreading the touch of every careless finger. Greatness, fashion, rank, the world's applause, what were all these things to him, with the secret he was trying to keep from his fellows gnawing at his breast? He desired no visitors; he did not wish for company; a

mere corner of all that grand house would have been more than enough for him; a life more humble and less intrusive would have seemed more fitted, he thought, than all the glare and hurry and luxury and prominence amid which so unexpectedly he found himself.

But Lady Moffat thought far otherwise. She had lived 'mewed up' long enough, she told him; she intended now to take some enjoyment out of existence. If he felt himself too old to take a pleasure in parties and society, she assured him her case was different.

'The children must have friends, she must have friends; they could not go on as they had been doing; why, every one she met was amazed and disappointed never to have had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with her before!'





IN A CANOE.

IN A CANOE.

It was awfully hard work. Our two canoes were as close as canoes could be; but every time I tried to get into a position where I could see her face, those abominable paddles were sure to come into collision, and you can't say the right kind of thing to a girl when you are always hitting her paddle. Talk about love-making on horse-back being difficult! Just try it in a canoe.

The hanging-woods of Cliveden were alive with a large picnic-party as well as countless birds, and I hadn't noticed that a stout old gentleman of the M.P. type was peering at us from the bank; but when I next battered up against the light bark of my adored one, a truly British voice shouted,

'Don't be a fool, sir! Those things are no better than walnut-shells!'

Indignation at this interference made me draw off, bristling all over.

'What *has* it to do with you, sir?'

Hot but sarcastic came the reply,

'O, upset yourself, by all means; but have the kindness to excuse my saying I'd rather you didn't upset my niece.'

His niece! Could anything be more unfortunate?

'I'm coming on shore now, uncle,' cried the fair Flora, brightly, casting but a single look at *me* as she sprang from her canoe, and slowly sauntered along the bank.

Must I make fast her canoe, or should I, in revenge, let it drift

away hopelessly amongst those lovely little islands of reeds and bulrushes which grow on purpose to shelter swans and lovers? No, I would not be so base.

This was how it was. I was up from Oxford, staying with a cousin of mine who was rather a swell, and who promised to do a good deal for me. This cousin had a lot of people staying with him, and Flora and her mother were amongst them; but her uncle I had never seen before. Now for the last week that sweet pretty little face had certainly grown brighter at my coming, and no one had stopped us when we strolled about in the moonlight; and this picnic she and I had looked forward to tremendously; why should that puffing, consequential old uncle turn up and spoil everything?

I made fast the two canoes, and then, with an air of firm determination (my cousin's wife has since told me I looked *sulky*), I joined the revellers. I decided *not* to seek Flora; on the contrary, I would show her how well I could get on without her. There was a very nice girl called Kate there; I fetched lobster-salad and pigeon-pie for her, and was as lively and entertaining as possible.

'*Quite* deserted poor little Flo?' asked my cousin's wife archly, as she passed me.

'O no,' I replied, in a pleasant off-hand manner; 'nothing of the kind.'

I glanced across at *her*; she was looking sad. My heart smote me, but I felt I must be firm. And

just then a great tall fellow I hadn't observed before offered her his coat to sit on. I redoubled my attentions to Kate. She had a good appetite, and I fed her on the fat of the land.

When it came to going-home time, I bethought me of how gradual and sweet would be the reconciliation; but when I looked about for Flora, she had disappeared in a large boat-full of guests, and so Kate and I had those two horrid canoes.

It was quite late, and the bright moon was shining over us before we neared Boulter's lock; and when we were all inside the lock, one small boat belonging to our party was missing; and just as we

missed it, the waterman called out that a gentleman in a small boat had shot the weir.

A woman's scream was heard, and Flora cried,

'He is drowned then—he is drowned!'

I pushed my canoe close up beside the boat in which she was seated, and murmured thrillingly,

'Dearest, I am here!'

'*You!* How dare you suppose, sir, that my daughter was thinking of *you*, when she is about to be married to the Honourable Captain Tolloby?'

That's enough. The horrid man survived, and she married him.

CHANGE OF AIR.

THE annihilation of distance through the agency of steam has rendered what was once a luxury confined to the few a necessity for the many. Time was when the journey from London to York or from London to Exeter was an affair not lightly to be considered ; pistols were examined, earnest farewells were taken, wills were drawn up, and every precaution adopted that care and anxiety could suggest. Difficulties thus encountered, men remained at home. Unless in Parliament the country squire busied himself looking after his lands, and was content to remain ignorant of the pleasures of a season in London. The trader lived over his warehouse immersed in business, the end of his ambition the office of Lord Mayor, and knew nothing of suburban villas with their trim gardens and Gothic furniture ; he was a citizen and a cockney, and not ashamed of the title. Merchants, professional men, the clergy, confined their activity to the sphere in which they had settled, and seldom quitted it save for the churchyard. In those old-fashioned days there was no talk of change of air, of periodical visits to the seaside, of drinking medicinal waters at continental spas. To visit the pump-rooms at Bath, Harrogate, or Tunbridge Wells implied the possession of a certain degree of wealth and of a certain social position. It was the exception for a man to leave his home as it was the exception for a man to belong to a club ; whereas now every man belongs to a club,

and every man goes away for change of air. What with Brighton in sixty minutes, Edinburgh in nine hours, Paris in eleven, the south of France in a day and a night, Rome in three days, Cairo in five, and New York in nine, especially when coupled with cheap fares and Cook's tickets, the obstacles which once surrounded the searcher in quest of change of air have been most effectually removed, and the only difficulty now is, out of so many places, all with special attractions, which to select. When the hot sun pours down upon us, when the pavement burns beneath our feet, when the glare in the streets blinds us, when the thermometer is 90° in the shade, it is imperative that we should breathe the ozone of the sea, the rarified atmosphere on the mountain-tops,—or the drainage of continental cities. Yet methinks our ancestors did very well without this eternal harping on change of air. They remained at home quietly and peacefully ; yet they rode as hard to hounds as we do, they could drink their three bottles at a sitting, they could tire us out at most exercises, and no doubt they worked hard when necessary. Whilst we, their degenerate sons, who are always complaining of our livers, our nervous system, or our rheumatic tendencies, cannot hunt three days a week without being knocked up by fatigue or bronchitis, or stick to work without our brains giving way, or indulge at a festive dinner or supper without it playing the very mischief with us the next morning.

Change of air, though we ride our hobby pretty hard, does not appear to be that universal panacea for all the ills that flesh is heir to, which certain of its advocates would wish to make us believe. Just as some pills are advertised to cure everything from corns to consumption, or from rheumatism to ringworm, so the inevitable change of air is prescribed for whatever malady we suffer or imagine we suffer. And at last the result has been attained. We know how soon a custom becomes a right: if a man lets you walk over his field without hindrance, at the end of a certain number of years there is a right of way, and what once was a privilege is a privilege no longer. 'You want change of air,' is the advice that has been so dinned into our ears by the doctors of the day that at last what was once a luxury is now a necessity. To remain in town in August is a grievance which cannot be endured, an injury, both physical and social, of the most heinous description. We all of us, no matter what be our position or our balance at the banker's, must have change of air at least once a year. My lord goes to his country seat, or fishes in Norway, or yachts in the Solent; the professional man or the tradesman travels abroad or takes his family to Scarborough or Eastbourne; the humble clerk spends his fortnight at Margate or Herne Bay; whilst even the cadger resents missing his few days at Gravesend or Southend. Let us look this question fairly in the face, and, considering the trouble and expense it puts many of us to, ask whether the game is often worth the candle, and whether we do not occasionally pay pretty smartly for our pleasures. Life, said the late Sir George Cornewall Lewis, would be very well if it

were not for its amusements; and some of us, mindful of past summers, may be led to say, Life would be very well if it were not for its compulsory (it has come to that) annual outings.

To the wealthy peer and country gentleman who, as the season wanes, quits his London house for his rural seat, to enjoy the charms of the most beautiful portion of the summer, and afterwards the sport of the autumn and the winter, our remarks do not apply. Such fortunate persons certainly obtain change of air; but they get it by going from one well-appointed home to another. It is to our gentry of the middle class and the upper middle class, who have no country seats of their own, who are not 'governors' of yachts, who cannot rent a moor, a shooting, or a salmon river—the class to whom change of air signifies lodgings or hotels. Take the ordinary paterfamilias. He quits his comfortable home, the seclusion of his library, the contents of his cellar, the well-drilled servitude of his domestics, his cook whose juicy joints and side dishes he so thoroughly appreciates, for the seaside. After a troublesome and irritating search he secures lodgings—drawing-room floor, with the usual complement of bedrooms attached to it; the cook has seen service in a nobleman's family and has married the butler, attendance therefore will be excellent; terms fifteen guineas a week, not including extras. For the first few days things look promising; then there is an evident falling off. It is the height of the season, and every room in the house is occupied. Your landlady seeks to pay all the expenses of autumn, winter, and the ensuing spring out of her two summer months. She is therefore economical, and consequently conducts her establish-

ment short-handed. You had arranged, as the drawing-room floor, that the ex-butler would attend upon you, brush your clothes, wait upon you during meals, and be, in short, generally useful to you, as the most important (that is, the most paying) lodger in the house. But soon you discover many sins of omission. Your clothes are intrusted to a maid of all work, who is always dirty, always in a profuse state of perspiration, and always in a hurry; needless to say that the bottoms of your trousers are still muddy, or if they have been brushed, they have been brushed upon your coat, and consequently the back and collar of that garment look as if they had been taking snuff. Perhaps a commercial gent or a well-to-do tradesman has taken the dining-room floor, and is rather more loquacious to the quondam butler than you are, and talks to him about the Marquis his late master, and gets information about the aristocracy; gives him cigars, and offers him frequent libations of sherry. Hence the butler is not so attentive to you as he might be; he brings up your meals late, sometimes he lets the maid bring up your dishes; and you find him occasionally, when he waits at dinner, not so cleanly in his person as he might be; and he wafts a sickly odour of spirits around the room as he hands the plates. He tilts the melted butter over an expensive dress of your wife's, and breathes hard, perhaps upon your bald head, as he puts down the joint. You feel it your duty to complain; you have put up without a murmur with lumpy bedding (bedding is never the strong point of lodgings), with inadequate toilette arrangements, and with easy-chairs with the springs out of order (sometimes you sit upon an exposed spring, and sometimes in a

hole; but however you sit, it is never easy): but you must draw the line somewhere; you are paying at the rate of 800*l.* a year, and you have a right to expect proper attention. You remonstrate with him. It is useless: he looks at you impertinently; makes allusion to the 'fust families in which he 'ave lived;' and implies that you are a poor snob out for a holiday, and ignorant of how things ought to be served. He quits the room in a huff, and a maid waits upon you during the rest of the dinner. You have had 'a row' with your landlord; and henceforth you are no longer a lodger, but an enemy in the camp. He passes you on the staircase without a word; he chides your children roughly when he comes across them; he comments upon your conduct to the other lodgers, and often within your hearing. If you ring the bell or demand anything, he goes below and bawls out to his wife, 'Them droring-room floor think they're everybody, always wanting summut!' and when he waits at dinner he dons an alpaca coat instead of the careful attire he first appeared to you in, because, as he says, 'he feels the 'eat hawful, and he aint going to put hisself in a sweat for nobody.' You have no redress; you lose your temper; you feel inclined to kick him out of the room; but what does it matter to him? You have agreed to take the rooms for six weeks; if you go, you forfeit the money, and the man will let your vacated apartments the next hour. So you grin and bear it, and count the days when you shall return home. Nor is the landlady a bit better. If your wife complains of the cooking (and to cook before one range six different dinners all at the same time is a feat not always successful in its results), she is met with a sneer

and a stare and a crushing reference to the Marchioness who piqued herself upon her *cuisine*. 'But some people is never content.' You lock your wine up, but it mysteriously disappears; your joints are systematically appropriated for the use of the kitchen; there are marks of doubtful fingers round your jam-pots. There is not sufficient wardrobe accommodation for the bonnets and dresses of your wife and daughters, and those fair ladies feel certain that in their absence their things are tried on. Suspicion, worry, and discomfort surround you. Perhaps you are suffering from an over-worked brain, and you want rest and quiet; these you do not get. Children are above you, and your morning sleep is disturbed by their early rising, romps, cries, and noisy tubbing; your room looks out on the back, where there is a complaining dog, or poultry with a cock of such imperfect intelligence as to be always mistaking the moon for the sun; or perhaps you are over the kitchen-offices, where, at a late hour of the night and at the first break of dawn, the clatter of crockery and of washing up is the music that soothes your slumber. In a house full of lodgers there are sure to be some gay spirits who come in late at night from dances, beach-wanderings, and whist at the club, and who hum or whistle as they go upstairs, and shy their boots out on to the landing as if they wanted to test the strength of its planking. You groan inwardly, for it is, perhaps, the third time you have been cruelly awaked that night. Your medical man has advised you not to worry yourself, and now your nurse alarms you. Your little boy, aged three, is fretful; the nurse doesn't like the look of him; she doesn't want to 'bother master,' she says to her mistress, but she

hears downstairs that the 'family as 'ave took the small droring-room 'ave a little girl with them, who 'ave only just recovered from the scarlet fever.' You are nearly mad. Bad cooking has seriously damaged your digestion; want of sleep has irritated your nervous system; absence of regular occupation makes you bored to death with the empty routine of seaside life; both you and your wife are worried about your children catching some infectious complaint, or making undesirable acquaintances; and what have you gained? Sea air: does the ozone, think you, compensate for all that you have had to go through?

Is this picture we have drawn an exaggerated one? We *know* it is not, for it is drawn from life. Should you, seeker after change of air, not be able to pay fifteen guineas a week, but have to content yourself with accommodation purchased at ten, or eight, or six, or four, or even two guineas a week, worse lies in store for you: bedding more reprehensible, cooking more dirty and greasy, children worse bred, and hence noisier and more in the way, and landlady and servants more extortionate and less active. Of course there are exceptions to every rule; but how many lodgings, reader, have you been into that you would wish to engage again? This is the age of cooperation; why should there not be at our fashionable seaside places coöperative lodging-houses—a mixture between a club and Queen Anne's mansion—where for moderate payment the bachelor or the paterfamilias may obtain apartments comfortably furnished, with good cooking, quiet surroundings, neat and active attendance; in short, *home* at the seaside? The idea is not a bad one, and we feel sure it would pay. Change of air, and yet not change

of comfort—what a desirable combination!

And now suppose that, instead of trying the seaside, you cross the Channel and take a holiday abroad. Say your liver is out of order, and you have been recommended to drink the waters at Homburg or Carlsbad. You arrive at your hotel or your lodgings; you visit the medical man; you act upon his orders and imbibe your various tumblers. Undoubtedly the waters do you good; your complexion becomes healthier; your liver is active, torpid no longer. Yet you are not well. Living in a cold foggy climate you are unaccustomed to the intensity of the mid-day heat on the Continent—you who abjure London in August have to put up with a state of things far more tropical! You are exceedingly careful as to your diet, yet the food you get fails to nourish you; whilst every dish, from the peculiar flavouring of its gravy or its sauce, disagrees with you. Accustomed to a delicacy in sanitary matters at home, the—to put it kindly—imperfect drainage system adopted in all continental towns (save Paris) shocks your fastidious tastes, and makes you in constant dread of recovering from liver only to fall a victim to typhoid fever. As soon, therefore, as your cure has been established you hasten away, only too glad to return to decent sweet-smelling England, congratulating yourself that you have escaped a zymotic disease from those 'awful stinks' *là-bas*.

Take another instance. You are not invalided, and you are going abroad for pleasure. Pleasure! Perhaps you are a bad sailor, and suffer such tortures crossing 'the silver streak' that you have to remain a few days at Paris to recover. Then when restored, and after much sight-seeing, fatigue,

heat, and dining (not wisely, but too well) at certain well-known restaurants, and thoroughly bilious, you set out for a long journey to the Pyrenees, Switzerland, the Tyrol, Italy, or wherever you may be going; yet wherever you *do* go the journey from Paris must be long. On your arrival, all the hotels (for we all travel at the same time and seek the same hotels) are full, and you have to content yourself—O paterfamilias, accustomed to your spacious bedroom, with its comfortable dressing-room and bath-room attached!—with a room that your housemaid would decline to occupy. As vacancies occur, you are promised a better apartment. Expecting soon to be changed to superior quarters, your wife tells her maid only partially to unpack her things; an arrangement, however, quite sufficient to make her seize upon every piece of furniture in the room for the disposal of her goods. You mildly expostulate. 'O fiddle de dee! A man can put his things anywhere!' Travelling, heat, strange diet, constant bustle, have developed in the wife of your bosom a temper happily not visible when at home. Accordingly you scatter the contents of your portmanteau on the floor, and appear at *table d'hôte* in a coat all in creases, and trousers with a most conspicuous wrinkle all the way down each leg. You find the dinner scanty, the wines sour; and instead of sitting near some lovely damsel, to whom you can air your knowledge of foreign languages, you are placed next a fat German, who eats like a ghoul, and makes you feel very faint as he rinses his mouth out at the end of the repast. There is a band in the evening, and you go to listen to the music; but the incessant jabber of the audience, the smell of

bad tobacco, and the chilly dews soon recommend you to return to the hotel. In a poky little room, with a bed too small for a growing boy of twelve, with windows which you can barely open, sleep is impossible, and so you lie awake thinking that you have gone through a good deal for as yet very little; and as the gray of early morn appears you are about to doze off, when the carts going to market, or a peasant blithely singing his national melody, or your next-door neighbour—an athletic youth—rowing the garçon for having called him an hour too late to make the ascent of the Piz Setzer, effectually alter your intention. 'It is impossible we can remain in this hole,' remarks your wife, with considerable asperity, the first thing in the morning. 'Get up, Charles; I want Parker to come in!' And so you dress hurriedly; no tub, no hot water, no things put out—only yourself—in order that your wife's maid may attend upon her mistress, and perhaps growl at what *she* has had to endure. And now begins the room squabble. You go to the bureau; you must have another room; but, alas, there are at least a dozen people complaining of their accommodation and wanting rooms. Day after day you visit that accursed office, and always the same answer—no rooms, people so contented with the place that they remain. You see new arrivals drive up; you listen, for you are an Englishman, and suspect that you are being done by these 'beastly foreigners;' they are at once shown into splendid rooms on the second floor. And you in an attic, close to the tiles and the working of the lift! You rush into the bureau hot with rage. You address the polite clerk: 'J'ai voo personnes—quite nouveaux arrivy—et voo donney

chambres deuxième étage! Ce n'est pas business!' You are met with a smile and the reply: 'But yes; but they've—it is six weeks ago—for those rooms telegraphed! At your turn you shall have; I cannot more promise.' These rooms settle upon your nerves. Your wife mixes with a little clique, and the one topic of conversation, the sole bond of union, is the question of rooms. 'Have you got into your rooms?' 'No; and you?' 'O no, not a chance for days!' And then ensue comments upon the mismanagement of the hotel, the preference shown to certain foreigners, and the superiority of English discipline and everything English. You yourself get into a little set, and your talk is of rooms. It is useless to leave, since every hotel in the place is crammed to the roof. One man tells you that he has been telegraphing for the last three weeks to some neighbouring hotel, yet cannot be taken in. Another you find has even worse accommodation than yourself; whilst a third, who came abroad to be cured of rheumatism, has to content himself with a bed in the bath-room! Therefore it is idle grumbling, and you have to make the best of it. You abuse all foreign customs, and glare at all foreigners; you sneer at their pleasures and amusements; you avoid making their acquaintance at the *salon de lecture* or the *salon de réunion*; you walk about criticising their dress, their figures, their music, their effeminate habits, and their dirty tricks. You are in a rage with Parker—a most respectable young woman in England—who is carrying on with a courier in the most flighty and continental manner. You are half starved, because most of the dishes are flavoured with garlic; the beef is harder than leather; the mut-

ton is something too awful to look at; veal omelettes and bread-and-butter are all you have been living on since you left Paris. Chattering grimacing Frenchmen, Germans who speak at the top of their voices, Spaniards who comb their hair at dinner-time, Italians who ogle your wife in a most objectionable way—you hate the whole lot! There are only three walks in the neighbourhood, and you know every pebble on their paths; besides, your wife has worn all her dresses, and knows every toilette in the place. In a happy moment you remark, 'Louisa love, what do you say to going home? Had enough of this place, haven't we?

Besides, if we go any further it is all the same kind of thing—good scenery and bad smells?' 'O Charles dear, it is what I have been wishing so for the last week: but I did not like to propose it to you; it seemed so ungrateful after the money you have spent. Ah, why did we ever leave home!' Why, indeed? Change of air has one great advantage, for it is an ill wind that blows no one any good: it makes us appreciate all the more the comfort, the elegance, and the repose of—that one word which, we are given to understand, has no equivalent in any foreign language—Home.

THE VIOLIN-PLAYER.

BY BERTHA THOMAS, AUTHOR OF 'PROUD MAISIE.'

CHAPTER XV.

CROSS-ROADS.

'*Sic itur ad astra.*' Such was the proud motto Sir Adolphus Brereton bore on his seal. But, '*Brama assai, poco spera, e nulla chiede,*' was the unassuming maxim that had guided his life—a life of half a century of unbroken prosperity. Born with a silver spoon in his mouth, he had taken kindly to the situation; unostentatiously, too.

Every one liked him, in a mild uninitiative way. Sir Adolphus had never had an enemy, except a few that his wife made for him, and the worst these found to allege against him was that he was hen-pecked. His only faults were virtues run to seed. Amiable he was to the extreme of laxity, content to the point of inertia, and generous with indiscrimination. For him life had always been May. And the single cloud on his satisfaction was the thought that he should leave no heir to inherit his estate. Nor was this cloud without its silver lining. Diana, he knew, was not so particularly fond of children as to pine for the fretting cares and anxieties of a nursery, which, whatever they could offer in compensation, would have chequered the brilliancy of her life, and impaired her youthfulness and beauty, which she meant and which promised to last indefinitely. She could find 'her life, her joy, her food, her all in all, her comfort, and her sorrows' cure,' in society

—whose queens, truth to say, find their office no sinecure.

Sir Adolphus was sensible that, of all the good hazards that had befallen him, his marriage with Diana Francombe was the happiest,—the most unaccountable, he said in his modesty. He had proved worthy of his prize, however. Short-sighted people blamed the unconcern with which he allowed foolish Actæons to make a display of their admiration for her. Sir Adolphus had a juster estimate of Diana's character, the key to a good deal of which he found in his own.

'A woman will have her fling,' quoth the philosopher within him, 'and after marriage, if you marry her young. So much the worse for foolish Actæons; for beginners, with their susceptible hearts and fatuitous heads. Her heart is set on high places, and these she will enter proud and unimpeachable, hand in hand with me.'

None shall look askance at her even. None shall whisper or hint. So he may well rest assured in triple confidence; for principle apart, and pride apart, and not to reckon her affection for him, she has the safeguard quality of the imperviousness to sentiment of one who can never forget herself, one in whom the dew of youth has early hardened into the diamond.

Glancing up from his newspaper as his wife entered the drawing-room on their reception night, Sir Adolphus thought he had never seen her look so well.

He was going to say so, but checked himself, sensible that he had made the remark so often before, that she was getting tired of it. Perhaps it was only that shade of blue which set off her complexion and slender supple figure peculiarly well. Or it might be a set of jewels she had on to-night; an heirloom of his mother's, and that she seldom wore, but which had a rare effect. He wondered vaguely why she had put them on for an ordinary 'at home' such as this.

She was more beautiful and vastly more fascinating than the girl of eighteen he had married. He watched her with pleasure as she went flitting from room to room, hovering round the tables to make sure that the flowers and ornaments were tastefully arranged, the lights in their right places, the chairs and settees disposed just as she wished. She knew the power of such trifles to render houses attractive, independently of hosts. Meantime her spouse did his best to entertain her with such fragments of gossip as he had picked up in the course of the day and made a note of—for his wife's sake, of course. In reality he relished them fully as much as she did, though affecting masculine superiority and indifference. The Catchpoles had arrived in Rome, and were at the Costanzi Hotel. Old Lady Dreadnought had slipped in getting out of her carriage, fallen on the pavement, and sprained her wrist. Mrs. Franklin, an American acquaintance of theirs, had a musical party to-night. Last, but not least, a traveller had been robbed and stabbed just outside the Porta Pia!

'How terrible!' said Diana nonchalantly. 'These stories will make me nervous at last. I shall begin to dread driving outside

the gates. Did you hear no more about this wretched man? Was it anybody?'

Sir Adolphus knew no particulars. He had caught up the report flying about the Piazza di Spagna. He supposed it was some tourist, an Englishman, he believed.

'It is so provoking that whenever you hear of a story, you only succeed in bringing it to me in little bits,' said Diana critically. 'If it is a joke, you lose the point on the way; if a marriage, you forget the names; and now you hear of a murder, and break off there. Ah, here comes somebody who will tell me everything, somebody who is, always *au fait*,' she concluded gracefully, in a softened tone of welcome. The somebody was her cousin, Mr. Gervase Damian, who was announced as she spoke.

'What do I hear, Diana?' he began quickly. 'Am I your book of reference? That is a flattering discovery to have made; but it entails an alarming responsibility.'

'I am going to put you to the test on the spot,' she said, smiling. 'I was just complaining, as you came in, of Adolphus, who always contrives to get hold of the wrong end of a story or a piece of news, and brings it to me piecemeal, which, you know, is so trying.'

'What's the news?' asked Gervase carelessly.

'Only about this unfortunate countryman of ours who has been stabbed close to the city-walls,' said Sir Adolphus. 'I heard only the report, no details. Perhaps you know more.'

'Before you murder him outright,' said Gervase, 'let me begin by telling you that the unfortunate hero of an unpleasant adventure, was—myself.'

'What, you, Gervase? Impossible—'

ble! Pray tell us!' they exclaimed, as eagerly interested as a minute before they had been really indifferent. The entrance of other guests delayed the recital a few minutes, and gave Gervase an audience for his story.

'It was about half a mile beyond the Porta Pia. I had been to visit the Basilica that lies out there, and was returning, as it happened, on foot and alone.'

'Broad daylight still, I suppose?' put in Sir Adolphus.

'Dusk had come on rather suddenly, as it does here after sunset. Still there was light enough for me to see the city-gate in the distance. There were labourers about, at work in the fields,—one would have thought oneself as safe as I am at this moment. I noticed an ill-conditioned-looking fellow leaning against the low wall of the road in front of me. I thought he would beg, but he didn't. I passed him without looking aside. The next moment he was there close before me—snatched at my watch-chain. I lifted my hand, and his knife flashed across my eyes.'

A thrill of horror ran round the circle.

'Of course it would have been madness to enter into a struggle with a ruffian armed as he was,' said Gervase slowly. 'The story takes long to tell, but it was all over in a moment, and he had made off across the fields. Long before I could rouse the stupid peasants, whom I more than suspect of conniving at the matter, he was out of sight.'

'How shocking!' cried a sympathetic chorus of female voices. 'What a narrow escape! what a mercy you did escape!'

'And your watch?' asked Sir Adolphus practically.

'O, watch, chain, and seals

went with him,' said Gervase, 'and are no doubt in the melting-pot by this time.'

'What have you done?' asked Lady Brereton. 'The authorities ought to make a stir, I really do think, when matters come to this.'

'I made my deposition to the police. They are after the fellow. I hear to-night they think they have caught him—a member of the International, a "Socialist," I'm told.'

'If so, he may repent this attempt to enforce his "no property" principles prematurely,' said Sir Adolphus judiciously. 'These outrages are a disgrace to a capital, and are let pass here much too easily.'

'O, they have taken the matter up,' said Gervase, laughing. 'The worst is, I shall have to go before the magistrates to swear to his identity, and have a lot of bother. I really think the law might lynch such fellows. It is too bad to give respectable people the annoyance of prosecuting them.'

'It is a public duty to do so,' quoth Sir Adolphus. 'I trust at least that they'll make an example of this individual.'

'I was very nearly making an example of him myself,' remarked Gervase, 'and saving everybody further trouble. If my blow had fallen, there would have been one rascal the less in Rome to-day, I fancy.'

'It is becoming dangerous to venture into the Campagna,' said Sir Adolphus uncomfortably. 'I hear the Italians never do, unarmed.'

'Then let them carry a whole arsenal about with them,' said Gervase. 'For my part, I shall always decline to go about with bowies and revolvers, as if one were in a lawless American rancho. I have spoken to the Ambassador.

He thinks the Government may interfere. We ought to be made safe from such outrages at all costs.'

The rooms were filling rapidly. Gervase had to narrate his adventure some dozen times in the course of the evening, and soon decided that there is no greater bore than to be the hero of a nine days' wonder. You are not allowed to think of anything else.

'Who is it who has just come in—he is talking to Diana now?' asked Gervase of his host. 'The gentleman in light hair and decorations. He looks like somebody one ought to know.'

'He? Why, Romer, the sculptor, to be sure. Don't you know him? The coming man in his own line, they say; the best fellow in the world, too, and a great friend of ours. Come, Diana shall introduce you.'

'Another time,' said Gervase. 'I am engaged to go to our American friends in the Via Sistina. So that's Romer, is it? I never met him before,' regarding Val with the wonder the latter was apt to inspire how such graceful productions as his should emanate from so rough-looking a human creature.

'You are leaving early,' said Diana as he wished her good-night.

'It is Mrs. Franklin's evening, you know. I have promised just to show myself there, and they break up early.'

'She has music to-night, has she not? Ah, and at her house you always hear the best.'

The reluctant young man was in fact excessively impatient to get off. Yes, Mrs. Franklin had music that night, and had invited a small circle of acquaintances to meet the young violinist, Laurence Therval, who had but yesterday arrived in Rome.

Gervase made his appearance in the middle of a song, and halted in the doorway. Laurence was at the further end of the room, near the piano, by the hostess. He watched her, listening to the song—the old refrain of spring-time and budding trees and birds, fresh leaves and flowers and delights—as it seemed to Gervase, his own mood set to music.

The singer—it was Madame Araciél—paused, and amid the applause that ensued Gervase worked his way along the room to his hostess, with whom, as with all old ladies, he was an immense favourite. The delicately flattering way in which he could disregard young beauties and graces to devote himself to the entertainment of their seniors was beyond all praise. It must be owned he generally got his reward. Exactly what he wanted in this instance. Without formally presenting him to the young artist, the good lady drew both into conversation, broke the ice between them, and presently, her other guests claiming her attention, she moved away. Gervase seized the moment.

'Do we need an introduction?' he said, looking at Laurence closely. 'I hardly know. Must I recall myself to your mind?'

He smiled, as if entreating her to remember without being told.

'It was you who came to our help in the crowd that night at Venice,' she said promptly. 'O, I remember quite well.'

He shook his head.

'Think again; our acquaintance is of older standing.'

Laurence looked at him with the old childish expression of wonder. Something in his face gave her the clue, and in a moment memory woke in her. Bleiburg—Linda—the water-party.

Her face brightened into a smile; she held out her hand, saying,

'You must forgive me. I recollect everything now. But I was such a child then.'

'And I a rude boy, I daresay,' said Gervase, taking her hand. Few people know how to shake hands. Gervase had a different way for every one. 'And as grown-up children we find each other once more—in Rome of all places. What wind has blown you here just at this moment?'

'I am not to play in public any more this season,' said Laurence simply. 'They say I am tired, and must rest for some months at least.'

'And where is the rest to be taken?'

'Here in Rome. Señor Araciél starts on a concert-tour in a few days. Madame, the children, and I are to stay for the spring.'

'I hope,' he said presently, 'as you are here for your health, you and your friends will remember that all parts of Rome are not equally safe, some more likely to destroy than restore it.'

'We have a little suite of rooms on the Piazza San Matteo,' she said. 'It is quite in the old part of the town, and foreigners do not go there to stay; but malaria never comes there either.'

Gervase had gained his object —to discover their *pied-à-terre*.

'Of course you have seen nothing of Rome yet,' he said. 'You will find it will give you plenty to do during your holiday.'

His own interest in the Eternal City and its wonders had been languishing a little; he felt it revive surprisingly as he talked of them to Laurence—places and scenes she had longed to see, and dreamt of, till it seemed like a dream to be among them.

It was midnight, and breaking-

up time at Mrs. Franklin's. It was an understood thing in that house that the old lady forewent late hours, and on the stroke of twelve the last belated guest was expected to disappear. Gervase gave a start on finding that he had so far forgotten himself as not to perceive how the crowd had thinned, leaving him and his attentions somewhat conspicuous. Madame Araciél was waiting in a hurry to summon Laurence away. He lingered to take a courteous, leisurely farewell of his hostess. Gervase that night had unaccountably neglected an old rule, whose practice had become a second nature to him, namely to address his attentions to the chaperon of the object of his admiration. The omission to-night was serious. Madame Araciél bounced off, rather out of humour, and questioned Laurence closely, as they drove home, about the stranger who had shown himself so *empressé*.

'He was at Bleiburg,' said the girl evasively, 'and his name is Damian.'

'O, I know that,' said Madame Araciél, nodding sagaciously, 'and much more, my dear child, than yourself.' For she had asked and obtained a biography of Gervase ten minutes before from a gossip-monger on whom the question chanced to have fallen, and who had dropped dark hints of warning against this plausible one, as a dangerous acquaintance, unprincipled, but irresistible, a sort of Mephistopheles and Don Juan bound up together. Laurence's replies silenced without reassuring her tutoress. 'The child's too good,' she thought; 'she's blind; but I shall keep my eyes open for her.'

Poor Madame Araciél! Gervase walked home thinking of her in the first place, and vowing within

himself that he would find out her weak point, and, whether it were flowers, or letters of introduction, or her singing, or her children, or her husband, he would so deal with it as to make an ally of her. Then he let his thoughts fall back on another image. 'She seems so happy. Why does she look so sad? I wish she would smile at me as she did at the little girl in Venice. When will she, I wonder?' In that day Gervase thought he would be happy.

He was passing the gates of the Brereton's villa; the lights were still brilliant within, and he wondered a little at the lateness of the party to-night. It had, in fact, been over some time. Sir Adolphus had gone a few steps to smoke a cigar with a friend who was returning to a neighbouring hotel. When he left, Mr. Romer, the last guest, was saying goodbye. His farewells were not yet over.

'Never to you,' Diana was saying, 'would I put forward what some would call a decisive reason in favour of a great artist's preferring England, that there his fortune is made, as yours, for instance, would be. No doubt Rome and its inspirations would be worth all the Royal commissions in the world.'

'It is an old temptation,' he replied. 'Art says, "Stay where you are free, where the claims on you are all of one sort, live to aspire and excel." But something else says, "If you want to grow rich you must be a shopkeeper in the first place, an artist in the second."'

'But I have often thought,' she said, 'that if there were a few more like you in our country, the standard there would rise. Why should not England be on a level with other nations in this respect? The influence on young students

there of a single mind such as yours among them might be immense, and all for good. O, it is needed.'

He was silent; she resumed presently,

'Rome has so much; England so little. Then there are more than you can know of who, like myself, have a great love for these things, and feel it checked, baffled, by want of sympathy and comprehension in those that they live with.'

'I should regret leaving Rome,' he said simply.

'Ah, not all your friends in England could make up to you for that,' said Diana, smiling and half turning from him. 'It was on other grounds that I urged you to what I feel must be a sacrifice.'

True, but Val at least was not self-deceived. Well he knew that if against his better judgment he emigrated to England, and spent the remainder of his life in modelling likenesses of those who would pay the highest price for them, making monuments to nonentities, repeating his old statues everlastingly, renouncing the palm of superiority, which was his only on certain conditions, of which absolute, almost primitive, independence was one—well, it would be from no lofty hopes of raising the standard of art-culture at home, no disinterested patriotic motive of any sort; but because the persuasive fascinations of this friend here were stronger than his judgment and his will.

CHAPTER XVI.

SCIROCCO.

THE afternoon sun fell full on the shuttered windows of the Piazza San Matteo. It is a neglected little square, with a bit of green garden in the middle, and large

dilapidated houses around—palaces once; but now so fallen from their first estate, that the proprietors are very happy to let them out in lodgings at tenpence a day.

Here Araciél and his party had taken a suite of apartments. Their sitting-room—so called conventionally, not to say ironically, so obvious were its deficiencies in accommodation—had long been used as an art-school by a club of German students, who had lately promoted themselves to better quarters, leaving behind them some of their goods and chattels deemed not worth removing, but which the thrifty Italian landlady had contrived so to dispose about the room as to give it an air, and herself some pretext for letting it as ‘furnished.’

Thus if carpets, wall-paper, bell-wires, curtains, sofas were wanting, on the other hand there were casts at the four points of the compass representing the four seasons—playing puss in the corner, Araciél observed; there were sketches and studies on the walls, and the panels of the door were illustrated with likenesses of the German students as caricatured by their fellows.

There were quaint, picturesque touches about the place to an eye on the look-out for them. Greenery trailed through the loophole windows on the staircase. Antique-looking flower-pots stood on the sills; plants with rich blossoms lending touches of brightness to the dull plastered façade. *They* did not mind the scirocco which had been blowing all day, and which seemed to have disabled the inmates, all but Araciél and his young son, who were having a romp, for which the length and bareness of the room offered peculiar temptations.

Cherubina lay outstretched on

the floor, gasping and groaning over the heat; Laurence stood leaning in the doorway of Madame Araciél’s room to catch such breaths of air as might waft in; Madame, within, was lying down in a state verging on collapse.

The Romans to a man were indoors and prostrate. Gervase, as he strolled down the Corso, met only foreigners, mostly English, who, like himself, had been hardened by the ordeal of a climate misnamed ‘temperate,’ which affords the best training for bearing extremes of weather unmoved.

It was not easy to find any particular house on the Piazza San Matteo. The numbers on one side were erased, on the other seemed to have run wild. A cobbler at work on a doorstep noticed the gentleman’s perplexity, and when Gervase said interrogatively, ‘Araciél?’ replied, ‘Second floor;’ first pointing through the entrance with a smile of confidence, and then to the pair of lady’s boots he was mending, which Gervase decided at a glance could not possibly belong to Laurence, before the cobbler had exhibited them to him with Madame Araciél’s name inside.

Gervase groped his way up an unswept stone staircase to the second landing. He listened instinctively for the sounds of a violin. Instead there came loud wild shouts, accompanied by violent stamping and scampering, the veriest uproar, and from the same apartments where he expected to find the divine artist, Araciél.

Three times he knocked unheard amid the hubbub. Then Cherubina sat up on the floor, said ‘Hush,’ and drawled out, in a childish voice, ‘Come in.’

Araciél and Master Domenico were diverting themselves with two wooden horses, part of the

legacy of the art-students, discovered by Domenico crammed away in a cupboard, and dragged forth in delight. Father and son, astride their hobby-horses and facing each other, were enacting a mock tournament. They were armed with paper helmets and a couple of mahlsticks for lances. The tilting was at its height. The room rang with martial shouts of 'Sound the charge!' and shook with energetic demonstrations. Araciél *fil*s had just succeeded in unhorsing Araciél *père*, who, remounting his charger, was preparing for a tremendous onslaught, when the stranger broke in upon their sport.

Gervase looked a trifle disconcerted. Not so Araciél; he never even thought of dismounting or taking off his mask, but glanced inquiringly at the intruder, whom he supposed to have entered their room by mistake.

Gervase apologised briefly. He, too, was convinced he had come to the wrong door.

'I am charged with a commission for Madame Araciél,' he explained, 'and was told I should find her here.'

'No mistake, no mistake,' said the artist, removing his visor and getting down from his war-horse, no more abashed than Domenico at being surprised at a childish game, nor less undisguisedly disappointed at its abrupt termination. 'Run, Cherubina, and tell the *mamma* she's wanted.'

Distinctly Gervase heard himself announced in the next room as *un bel signore*, after which Cherubina was told to shut the door.

Madame Araciél—nerves, headache, exhaustion, suddenly forgotten—was trying how soon, with Laurence's assistance, she could array herself becomingly in a light *peignoir*, the only

presentable costume at hand. Meantime Araciél kept running in and out, to see if she was ready, said he; but in reality to relieve his embarrassment as to how to entertain a guest who intimidated him considerably, and to whom he found about as much to say as Cherubina. He never once thought of questioning Gervase about his errand. It was a law in that household that Araciél might mind anything he liked but his own business and his family's. Experience had proved, and he acknowledged, that others might manage his affairs badly, but none so badly as he.

At last his better half sallied forth smiling, trying hard to look as if she had not just dressed for the occasion and in a great hurry. She gave a slight start back, unable to conceal her surprise at confronting last night's Mephistopheles. He was excusing himself very courteously for his presumption in calling, and added, turning to greet Laurence, who followed her,

'I must rely on my previous acquaintance with Mdlle. Therval for an introduction. Dare I hope she has given me a good character?'

'Mdlle. Therval sees all the rest of the world in the light of her own goodness,' said Madame, with emphasis meant to signify that *she* was not to be taken in.

Gervase understood; but continued to address, not only his conversation, but his notice, exclusively to the elder lady.

'I am here on a matter of business,' he continued; 'it is about a private concert, or party rather, given by an English lady who desires your acquaintance.'

'Sit down, sit down,' said Madame Araciél pleasantly, but thoughtlessly; for she and her guest looked round in vain for available chairs.

'O, it need not detain you long,' said Gervase considerably, pretending not to notice the deficiency. 'Do you happen to know Lady Brereton at all?'

'Lady Brereton?' repeated Madame Araciél contemplatively, reluctant to reply in the negative. There was a friend of hers who had known a Lady Brierley; and there was Lewis Brereton, the new tenor; but then his real name, to her certain knowledge, was Jones.

Before she could answer a loud shriek from Domenico made her start, and Gervase frown involuntarily.

'Peace, irrepressible one!' implored his mother; but the real mischief-lover, Araciél, who was making mock passes at his son and heir with his lance, continued to gesticulate unseen by the rest.

'Perhaps you may have met her,' Gervase resumed; 'she and her husband travel a good deal; they have taken the Villa Nuova on the Pincian for the season, and—'

Here one of the legs of Domenico's steed came off, and horse and his rider rolled down with a crash.

'That boy is irrepressible!' sighed Madame Araciél; 'his father spoils him,' she apologised to Gervase. 'Come into the garden, Mr. Damian; the sun has gone down, it will be cooler out of doors; there we can talk quietly. The scirocco has made Domenico perfectly unmanageable all day. Come, Laurence.'

Cherubina, unbidden, followed the party, and Madame led the way, apologising as she went.

'My husband is the worst man of business that ever lived. Everything of that sort I have to manage for him; and I can assure you, Mr. Damian, it is no light burden for a woman.'

Mr. Damian looked deeply attentive, and expressed such cordial sympathy that her confidence in him was then and there established.

The 'garden' was a forsaken courtyard, where high stone walls cast an agreeable shade. A running fountain in a recess in the wall enhanced the delightful impression of coolness and freshness. Masses of ferns and mosses and lichens peeped through the interstices; the rill bubbled up and ran over them, turning the grotto into a fairy garden. On each side of the spring was a stone bench. Gervase put himself next Madame Araciél and opposite Laurence, who sat with Cherubina squatting at her feet.

Gervase's errand was soon told. Lady Brereton, his cousin, of whom he drew a flattering portrait as a kind of Corinne among amateurs, was desirous of having music at her house on a certain afternoon, and engaging Araciél's wife to sing. He (at his urgent request) had been deputed to arrange matters. As she listened, although he paid her no distinct compliments, he so managed to put his request that the whole of his address was felt as a compliment in large.

What won her over entirely was an invitation for herself and Mdlle. Therval to go and lunch the next day at the Villa Nuova, and Gervase was the bearer of his cousin's card and request. They would be able, then, to settle all musical business matters personally. Madame Araciél was overjoyed; thought Mr. Damian, without exception, the most charming young man she had ever beheld; and when he had fulfilled his errand he was not more desirous to be detained than she to detain him. Her conversation seemed to interest him particularly; she

grew rapidly confidential: explained how Araciél was soon leaving them for a six months' concert-tour; how circumstances forbade their accompanying him; how manifold were the vicissitudes of artist-life; what a treasure Laurence had been to them; how careful she herself had to be of her husband's gains, since money slipped through his fingers like bran. She even hinted at an unfortunate *penchant* for gaming, which had more than once brought them to extremities, and of whose revival they were in constant dread. Gervase listened, interested for Laurence's sake, and genuinely indignant. A fiddler, gambler, and buffoon! A worthy guardian, indeed, for the gifted young girl living under his roof!

He was talking of taking leave, but the wife was still holding forth on her troubles, when a loud shriek from indoors interrupted her. A wail followed, with piteous shouts for *mamma*. Madame Araciél, excusing herself hurriedly to her visitor, flew off to the rescue.

'It's only Domenico,' said Cherubina disdainfully. 'He's as bad as papa, cries out for every scratch!'

Slowly the wails subsided; a motherly voice was heard uplifted in alternate sympathy and scolding. Gervase had forgotten that he had been saying good-bye. Looking at Laurence standing by the fountain, with a background of wild flowers and maidenhair fern springing out of the wall, he thought of Egeria. Antiquaries were laying their heads together to determine the right shrine of that nymph. Gervase thought it was he who had found it, and undeterred too.

How was it that in the presence of this girl his head would go fill itself full of poetical ideas? Another half hour and he will be

talking scandal with Diana, dry politics with Sir Adolphus, and Laurence will be mending Domenico's socks. For the moment they two are in another, an invisible world. Neither was mindful of Cherubina's presence. The child sat on the ground, tracing letters on the gravel with a stick.

'Where is your home now?' he asked presently.

Laurence raised her eyes.

'An artist may not have one,' she said, 'as you mean it. He is at home everywhere, which means that he has none. Señor and Madame Araciél never stay long in one place.'

'And you go with these people, and have your home wherever they happen to be?'

'For eight years I have lived with them, just as if I were their child.'

'And as happy?' he inquired.

There was a moment's silence. Then Laurence said, with animation,

'Have they been kind to me? Why, the angels in heaven couldn't have been kinder,' she laughed and played with Cherubina's tangled flaxen hair.

'I should like to know who wouldn't be kind to you!' said Gervase impulsively. 'They must be devils in hell who would not, I think.'

Cherubina turned round and struck in abruptly,

'Will this Englishwoman, this Lady Brereton you were talking about, be kind to her too?'

Laurence shook her head rebukingly, and chid the wilful little animal. Gervase said oracularly,

'Lady Brereton takes great interest in Middle Therval ever since she heard her play at Venice. Why should she not be very kind to her?'

Cherubina had turned her back

again. Had Gervase's mind not been otherwise absorbed, he might have observed that his name was being traced over and over again on the ground by the child.

'Rome is said not always to be very kind to musical artists,' he remarked presently. 'People here care very little for music as we comprehend it. They are not even ashamed of their indifference.'

'It is so strange,' said Laurence, 'to come to a place where music makes no part of the life of every one. It is like being in a country where you don't know the language.'

'The better for those who speak your own, and can listen and understand,' he returned significantly.

They were silent. The sun was sinking slowly, the last rays dying away over their heads.

Again Gervase's imagination seemed to him to be running riot. He could not take his eyes off that Vincian face. A sceptic or a cynic would have searched it vainly for signs one would fain have away—worn lines, not written by thought or feeling, but the stain of artificial life and gas-lamps, late hours and wear and tear; the set smile that, from having to come to order, loses the power of spontaneity; the involuntary mannerisms of those who have had to make their way by pleasing mankind at large from the stage or the platform.

Not his own sister's face was freer from traces of too early and too close contact with the vulgarities of life. No violence had ever been done to that mind by its own self. There are happy natures, strangers equally to vanity and shyness, and that never need constrain themselves to please. She seemed an Ariel-like creature, whom one might send on an errand to the sun or the stars,

with some essence in her spirit that made contamination from evil an impossible, an inconceivable thing.

He asked her to tell him something of how she had passed those years since the old time at Bleiburg. Years during which the child-student had grown into the woman, the artist. She told what she could; he seemed to catch the whole from the outline,—a simple, a perfect existence, so far. One purpose in life, one unquestioned, definite aim, to which all else had somehow converged.

Suddenly Gervase saw Cherubina's large round eyes fixed on them with more intelligence than he liked. He rose, and said he must go and let his cousin know the result of his errand, adding in another tone, 'You will like Lady Brereton; you mustn't be prejudiced by her English manner. Foreigners are apt to think her cold and distant at first.'

'She cares much for music, you said?' asked Laurence.

'She spends a good deal of her time and her conversation and her money on art,' said Gervase evasively. 'For the rest you will see and judge for yourself, at the Villa Nuova to-morrow.'

'Shall you be there?' asked Laurence simply.

'Might I?' he said very low.

Laurence's face was troubled. Madame Araciél's voice, approaching on the staircase, restored the balance of Gervase's mind. When she came into the courtyard to summon the girls indoors he was gone, and Cherubina was pointing triumphantly to the Italian-English exercise she had been writing on the ground:

'Quel Inglese—I odio. That Englishman—I detest him.'

'Naughty child,' said the mother vaguely; but Cherubina's little naughtinesses were too fre-

quent to elicit separate notice. 'Come in, girls; you will catch fever staying out at sunset;' and Madame led the way, entirely wrapped up in considering what she should wear to-morrow at the Villa Nuova. The others followed slowly.

'He's gone,' said Cherubina to Laurence. 'I'm glad; he would like to take you away from us, Renza, and I can't bear him;' she threw herself into Laurence's arms, and hid her head on her shoulder.

But Laurence had turned very white. Cherubina, as she uplifted her tearful face, saw it, and repented.

'He wants to get you away from us. I hate him,' the words she was about to reiterate froze on the child's lips, so startled was she at the change in Laurence's countenance, as she said, in a strange low voice,

'Cherubina, don't say that any more; you hurt me.'

The child dashed away her tears, caught Laurence round the neck, kissing her passionately, and repeating incoherently,

'I won't, never again. But I can't help it; I love you so. I want no one to love you but me.'

Laurence kissed her and went into the house. She was sensible of a curious brightness of spirit. She wished she could have played that night. She felt as if no difficulties could exist, no composition be obscure, no subtleties lie beyond ken.

A sunbeam had broken into the solitude in which the child, the girl, the artist had lived and moved.

CHAPTER XVII.

VAL ROMER: A DAY OF HIS LIFE.

'BRUTUS!'

'His servant!'

'With what particular mischief is Satan filling your idle hands at this particular moment?'

'*Signore!*' remonstrated Brutus feelingly. 'Here have I been patiently furbishing up his studio. I know the *signore* cannot bear disorder.'

'I saw you. Busily smoothing the crumples out of the orange-leaves. Hard at work whisking away the flies from the noses of the statues. Enough. I let you off for the next hour, Brutus. Go and put on your Sunday clothes, and take this note to the Villa Nuova.'

'The *signore* wants me to take the note to the Villa Nuova?' repeated Brutus, in a tone of well-feigned surprise.

'I thought I heard myself say so. And, Brutus,' continued Val, regarding his incorrigibly lazy Roman vassal, 'let me advise you never to look so cross. It spoils the cut of the face.'

'The *signore* forgets it is ten o'clock,' murmured Brutus gently, 'and the sun already high.'

'Then make haste, or it will be higher and hotter still. You have an umbrella. If not, take mine.' He turned on his heel and concluded, 'If you aren't more than an hour delivering the note, you may, if you like, go afterwards into the church of Sant' Isidoro opposite, and say masses for the soul of your great-grandmother till sundown, and then return in the cool.'

'Thanks to the *signore* for the permission,' said Brutus grandly. 'Does he, then, not require my services?'

'Apparently not, since he makes you a present of them,' quoth the sculptor, laughing, and vanishing into his workshops.

The note was one of excuse. Diana had sent a card of invitation to a musical party that after-

noon; Val had declined. Plea: he was too busy. Well, indeed, might his work in hand sit heavy on his soul; it had gone amiss with it lately.

Val had a certain standard of industry and progress, which he felt bound to try, at least, not to desert. Looking back some months, it alarmed him to see how he had slipped down from it. For the first time, he felt the foundation-stone of his future decidedly shaky.

Wherein lay the secret of his unusual success? Simply in a still more unusual capacity for hard work, with which he had let nothing, or nobody, interfere. He had gone on his way, like a steam-engine, bearing down all that blocked the path. But let the engine be thrown off the line, the steam-power makes havoc in proportion to its degree. Val was at difference with himself; and his welfare was imperilled by his strong, but headstrong, personality.

He saw the danger, and meant to curb it. He would withdraw himself from distracting influences, and bury himself in work alone. So far self-command. Yet, no sooner had he gloriously resisted the day's temptation than he began ingloriously to repent. After all, he had been a fool not to go. He had written curtly, too. Lady Brereton might be surprised, displeased. He fell to pondering the words he had used: might they be misunderstood? Would she answer the note? And by and by, he found himself in a statuesque attitude before his clay model, motionless, his hand uplifted, his brains anywhere but on the spot.

He flew into a rage with himself, and set to work in earnest. He was engaged on the central statue of a group for the fountain

at Hawkwood Park. The figure had fared abominably; sketch after sketch being tried, and discarded by the artist in disgust. He felt the right idea creeping about in his mind, he said, and failed to lay hold of it. For that he must concentrate his faculties, as of yore, and he could not. That morning's work did not mend matters. The clay remained lifeless and inane as ever. Val could have torn it to pieces with vexation.

On a sudden impulse, he threw back the curtain that concealed the Glee Maiden. How had he gained in technical skill since he moulded that! Yet there was a freshness about it, that made him feel old for a moment.

But the proof of abiding genius consists in the survival of youthful feeling in maturity. Youth is genius—a flash that dies quickly, unless we have oil in our lamps. The test, for Val, was to come.

He took up his tools again, but already his thoughts were at the Villa Nuova. He heard Brutus return, bringing neither note nor message. Superfluous. Her image, her words, inflections of voice, her least looks and gestures were invested, for him, with the same keen barren fascination that clings round stories of the supernatural.

Meantime the clay figure was making progress that was worse than none; so many hours' work left him just so much farther from his aim.

'Brutus!'—when Val hailed him in that tone of voice, Brutus was a dumb meek slave. 'Look to the studio. I'm going out.'

Brutus watched him with solicitude. The lion's moods must be humoured; he always came round soon. Val crammed a wideawake on his head rather fiercely, pocketed his sketch-book (he had been known to go

out without his hat, but never without his album), and went on his way, shunning the larger thoroughfares. In the solitude of the backstreets of a capital the artist found an influence as soothing as in forest or field.

Having taken the edge off his ill-temper by violent exercise, he began to saunter and look about, his eyes picking up the little tit-bits of beauty in which Rome, nay, every Italian town abounds. Here it was a *contadino* with a basket of fruit; here a water-carrier filling brazen buckets at a well; here a bit of antique moulding in a wall, or a peep of a distant ruin.

As his temper got better, his thoughts reverted seriously to his fountain. O, that luckless figure, touched and retouched till it couldn't believe in its own identity, he said quaintly. What was he to do? Throw up the commission? Put his name to a composition he was ashamed of—and with reason? or postpone the fulfilment of an engagement already delayed much too long? Three causes—all bad. Destruction!

His eyes roving hither and thither, artist fashion, seeking what they might devour, suddenly rested on the figure of a child at a little distance, seated at the base of a broken column; a fair-haired thing of perhaps twelve years old, small but perfectly moulded, the incarnation of soft infantile bloom and the freshness of existence, looking as if she had just been shaken down from the tree.

Val was staring fixedly. The look, the contour, the attitude—'Why, it's my statue, my statue! Eureka!' he said to himself, in indescribable exultation. 'Aha, did not the immortal Raphael discover the divine Madonna in a peasant

woman sitting under her vine at her cottage-door, and sketch her off at once on a tub in white chalk? Now, Romer, your turn!'

He began to draw rapidly. Let him but seize the leading points, the expression of his idea before him, assimilate it, so to speak, the rest will follow. If only the little baggage will keep still.

Fortunately Miss Cherubina—for it was she—remained unaware she was doing duty as a model. For ten minutes she sat quietly; the wistful childlike face scarcely stirred a feature; it was as though, so long as Val's eye was upon her, it mesmerised her. The spell lasted till he, having completed a most successful outline, suddenly relaxed his gaze. Instantly the child turned, and perceived the artist. She jumped up and stood regarding him mistrustfully, with her finger on her mouth.

'What are you drawing me for?' she demanded, coming nearer, her incipient hostility checked by Val's good-natured and unmistakably English countenance.

He replied impressively,

'For a statue of Innocence, to form the central figure of a group, to stand at the head of an ornamental piece of water in Hawkwood Park, Hampshire.'

Cherubina was posed and said nothing. Val, to mollify her, exhibited his sketch.

'It's me, it's me exactly!' she said approvingly; then wonderingly, and with emphasis, 'You must be clever.'

'As clever as Renza,' she added to herself, watching him as he packed up his album, in her favourite childish attitude, with her finger up to her mouth.

'You forgive me, then, eh,' he said, 'for stealing your picture? After all, it's you, now; but it won't be in a few years' time. It's not as if you were a grown-up

lady, and were already what you meant to be.'

'I am grown up—why, I'm fifteen nearly,' returned Cherubina, stretching herself to her full height.

'I beg your pardon, I took you for twelve at the oldest,' said Val bluntly.

'Domenico's twelve, and he's a head shorter than me,' she said; 'and he's quite a baby still; but then, so is papa.'

'What's your name?' asked Val.

'Cherubina Maria Araciel,' she answered proudly.

'Araciel, Araciel!' and Val looked up, saying, with a knowing expression, 'Why, then your father—your father plays the violin a little now and then, eh?'

Cherubina nodded sagaciously.

'Do you know him?' she asked.

'I haven't the pleasure,' said Val. 'Ah, he's a great man, your father. I heard he was coming to Rome, some time like the present; and I meant to have called on him, to ask if he would do me the honour to come and see me at my studio.'

'Where's your studio?' asked Cherubina.

Val pointed towards the Villa Marta. 'Last house in the big broad street—before you come to the Lateran.'

'What, the little marble temple behind the rails, in the garden?' she exclaimed eagerly. 'I passed it on my way. I wanted to pick some oranges—I thought if any poked their way through the bars I might. Papa is so fond of them, fresh off the tree.'

'If you will take my studio on your way back,' said Val graciously, 'I will pick you some fresh oranges, and you shall take them to your father, with my card and compliments.'

Thus, with his extemporised young-lady companion beside him,

Mr. Romer retraced his steps to his villa. He brought the child into the garden, thinking that would amuse her; but the curtains before the portico of the temple were pushed aside, and Cherubina had caught a glimpse of the houris within.

'I want to see the statues, please,' she said shyly but firmly; and Val took her inside, amused and naïvely gratified by her naïve and boundless admiration of the ladies Carmen, Vashti, Salome, and company. He brought her through to the inner room where he worked, made her take for a moment the attitude of the figure he required. Ah, he had captured the idea he had been after so long—substantiated it. He saw his way now, and his spirits rose. As to the child who had unconsciously served him such a good turn, he was ready to give her anything she asked.

Cherubina, utterly overawed by the spectacle of his work, contemplated him reverentially, as a kind of Olympian Jove. But in this mood Val was not at all alarming personally, and her curiosity was sharp.

'What's behind that curtain?' she asked timidly.

Val waited before replying.

'A young lady.'

Cherubina stared. 'Who is she?' in a whisper.

'She is a musician like your papa.'

'May I see her?' asked Cherubina, mystified and inquisitive.

Val hesitated. He felt unaccountably inclined to humour this pretty little girl. He withdrew the curtain, disclosing the Glee Maiden.

Cherubina gazed a minute, then gave a sharp exclamation of surprise.

'Renza, Renza!' she cried. 'Why, where did you see her?'

You must have sketched her walking about, as you sketched me. But we only came the other day. How quick you must have been to finish the statue already! Renza, O, isn't she beautiful! I've seen her look just like that.'

Cherubina stood with clasped hands before the Glee Maiden, adoringly. Val rubbed his forehead, in a maze.

'Renza?' he repeated. 'Will you have the great goodness to tell me who she is?'

'Laurence, our Laurence—Mdlle. Therval.'

Val gave a long-drawn whistle. Cherubina heard him mutter, 'Ah, she knows Therval, my father's *protégée*,' and turned quickly from the marble to the sculptor.

'Then you—why, you're Val!' she cried, elated, clapping her hands. 'I've heard ever so much about you—she has so often wondered if she would see you again.' She stopped short, struck by sudden shyness: somehow, she had always thought of him as a big boy. It was not Val who stood before her now, but Mr. Romer, a person of consequence.

Half an hour later, Cherubina was leaving the Villa Marta with a bundle of oranges plucked by herself. Did she know her way to the Piazza San Matteo? asked Val. O yes! But seeing her start off unhesitatingly in the opposite direction, he interfered. Then Cherubina confessed that she could not find her way about yet, and was forbidden to go out. But mamma and Renza were at a concert at Lady Brereton's (Val started), and papa was packing up; and he and Domenico were so naughty, and made so much noise, that in short Cherubina saw nothing for it but to be naughty too, and went and played truant accordingly. Val insisted on escorting her back in person; he

would take this opportunity of paying his respects to her father.

'Papa leaves for Milan to-night,' remarked Cherubina, as they approached the Piazza. 'I wonder what tricks he and Domenico are up to now. Something, you may be sure.'

The utterance was prophetic; her desertion had been duly noticed and reprobated; whereupon Araciél and his imp set about devising just penalties for her on her return, and a paper bag of flour was poised on the top of the door, ready to descend on her devoted head the moment she entered the apartment.

'Here she comes!' shouted Domenico, hearing the house-door swing, and peeping out of the window in time to catch a glimpse of Cherubina's vanishing skirts.

'Hide, boy, hide,' said Araciél, darting into the next room; Domenico disappeared into the cupboard.

Steps mounted the stairs, the door was pushed sharply ajar, and down came the avenging shower; but, alas, not on the guilty head. Araciél and Domenico, rushing from their hiding-places to deride Cherubina, confronted a respectable-looking gentleman, a perfect stranger, coat and hair white as a miller's with the contents of the bag.

'Papa, papa!' cried Cherubina, in indignation and despair; 'why, this is Mr. Valentine Romer, a great sculptor and a friend of Renza's. He has come to see you, and brought you some fresh oranges; and *this* is how you treat him!'

She concluded half-crying, somewhat to her own surprise. Never had she taken papa's fooleries to heart before. Poor Araciél, abashed and penitent, was at his wit's end how to apologise. Val broke into a hearty laugh.

'Aha, Miss Cherubina, it strikes me I've walked into a trap laid for somebody else. Never mind, there's no mischief done.' He shook the flour from his hair and advanced, saying, 'Señor Araciél, I hear you are leaving Rome to-night. I, as an artist and a resident here, should be sorry that you should have passed through, and I not have had the honour of shaking hands with you.'

Araciél's countenance cleared at once. He was delighted; the honour was all on his side, he said respectfully, already full of veneration for the sculptor, whose name, however, he did not remember to have heard before, which argued no obscurity on Mr. Romer's part. Araciél's acquaintance with the facts of art-history, ancient and modern, was hazy. He was reported to have put himself to some inconvenience to stop at Florence, and inquire for Michael Angelo's address, intending to leave his card at the Villa Buonarrotti, not wishing, he said, to go through without calling on such a distinguished man.

In two minutes, thanks to Mr. Romer's geniality, they were chatting like old acquaintances. Araciél pressed his visitor to stay.

'The ladies will be in directly,' he said. 'So you know our Renza. Ah, she is a treasure—like no one. Ask Cherubina here. I do regret, sir, that I have made your acquaintance so late; but the others shall all come and see you at your studio.'

Araciél had an astonishing facility for accepting eventualities of all sorts. It never occurred to him to ask or wonder how Mr. Romer and Cherubina had managed to make acquaintance and return together. It is probable that if he had suddenly found himself in a world where men's heads grew beneath their shoul-

ders, he would have familiarised himself with the situation very soon. Val, for his own part, felt very much at home; and at last the generally froward and suspicious Domenico began to regard him with favour, and came and sat on his knee.

'What of this youngster,' asked Val good-humouredly; 'is he to play the violin, like his father?'

'No, no; anything rather than that,' replied Araciél solemnly. 'Sir, I would sooner see a son of mine in his grave than a professional musician. Domenico is to go into business as soon as he is old enough. Ah, here come the ladies at last,' as carriage-wheels in the Piazza announced their return.

His wife came rushing into the room, bubbling over with the latest intelligence from the Villa Nuova.

Val's eyes skipped the good matron, eager to catch sight of Laurence; she was stopped in the doorway by Cherubina, who was whispering explanations to her very fast.

Val had seen more beautiful, more seductive women; but here was the being that had captivated his boyish imagination. The impression the ideal child had called forth, and which had slept for ten years, he felt re-arise—the old charm, unlike anything in his intermediate experience.

'Such a success,' began Madame, bowing politely to Mr. Romer. Wherever they went strangers were always dropping in to see her husband. Madame had a bad memory for names and faces, and felt quite uncertain if she and this gentleman had met before or no. 'The child played as I never yet heard her myself; they are all enchanted. The Prince of Pumpnickel, whom we met at Munich, you know, was in tears. He brought up the Princess,

who kissed her on both cheeks. Lady Brereton is the most charming, beautiful English lady you can imagine. Mr. Gervase Damian was there, and introduced us to every one worth knowing, he said. Sir Adolphus is the most perfect English gentleman; he handed me down to the carriage himself. But Laurence—you ought to have been there. Baron Miramar—and he is the best judge of music in Rome—said he had never heard anything to compare. He has asked us to go and stay at his palace on the Lake of Como. They all agree no such playing has been heard here for years.'

Val, looking at Laurence, thought he could believe anything of that face. Some deep feeling—no doubt joyousness in her artistic achievement—was stirring her. She looked as if her spirit had been touched by enchanting hands, and all the sweet music of her nature was in resonance.

'Felicia, my dove,' said Araciél to his wife, as she stopped talking, 'let me present to you Mr. Valentine Romer, the great sculptor,' he added knowingly.

Proud, proud was Madame to make the acquaintance of so famous an artist, one whose name was in every one's mouth. (It must be, if Araciél knew all about him.) 'Laurence,—I must introduce our child.'

'But I think we are old friends, Mdlle. Therval and I,' said Val; 'so old, that I mustn't grumble if I'm forgotten.'

Laurence held out her hand, her countenance filled with pleasure; he had found her again in so happy an hour, when life and the world seemed so beautiful, that she forgot to be surprised at this pleasure. It was only more roses in summer.

'I heard your name spoken, heard you were come to live in

Rome, and wondered if it could be the same—I could hardly believe it.'

'The same,' said Val, with a smile, the odd, humorous smile she had seen on no lips since they parted last. 'Do you believe it now?'

'Yes,' she said gladly; 'for do you know you are not changed—not really.'

'You could not have paid me a nicer compliment,' he rejoined. 'I like to flatter myself I've nothing of a Judas in my disposition. But after all, I'm the more changed of the two. I find you what I left you, a violin-player. You left me a lawyer's boy, and find me—'

'A great man,' said Madame flatteringly. All great men are modest. Mr. Romer was no exception, else why should he seem momentarily embarrassed by her compliment?

The servant of the establishment now appeared on the threshold, bearing a vast basket. It contained the family dinner, sent in thus, Roman fashion, from a neighbouring restaurant. Domenico announced that they were to have wild boar to-night for a treat, because papa was going away. Val was pressed to join the meal, and acceded readily. Araciél was a delightful host to-night; he was quite at ease with this man Romer, famous man though he might be; he inspired none of the *mauvaise honte* that had paralysed the violin-king's senses like a nightmare in the presence of Mr. Gervase Damian.

It was poor Araciél's lot, like a beautiful, not over-wise woman, to be visited by the extremes of admiration and contempt—in other words, to be never more than half understood. Now Mr. Romer had struck the balance, and struck it in his favour; Mr. Romer had a liking for seeming incongruities.

Cherubina, who sat opposite the

guest, forgot her wild boar and raisin-sauce in wondering contemplation of his leonine physiognomy. Madame was still full of the Villa Nuova; Laurence was in unusual spirits.

That farewell repast was at least as remarkable for its deficiencies as for its luxuries; but whatever went wrong in the *menu* only made food for fresh merriment. It was over, but there was no thought of Mr. Romer's leaving. He helped Araciél with his portmanteaux, which had never been properly fixed and strapped before. Finally he accompanied the party to the station. Araciél took his whole family to see him off. The violinist was safely lodged in the train, and the guard strictly enjoined not to let the gentleman succeed in mistaking his destination; he would infallibly try; but to see him landed at Milan, where a friend would meet and look after him.

Araciél launched, Val put the party into a *vettura*, and walked back to his studio, counting over the events of the day, which marked it with a red letter in the sculptor's life.

His statue was saved. Thanks to Cherubina, that torment was at an end. He felt secure of it now.

He had met his old playfellow again. How had that meeting left him? With the old half-instinctive feeling full grown into a delighting admiration of which he was ready to give account. 'Ah,' thought he, 'if a man could look upon such a face as that once every day, the old serpent in him would never dare show its head.'

The friction of the world, that subtle contamination of life, that corrupts pure souls, and strips aspiring ones of their wings, does fail sometimes to do its work. It had failed here, he felt sure.

Nay, he could believe of this

girl that years had but refined what was pure, and elevated what was noble. Such a thing may come to pass in a life bent on contemplating and striving after what is beautiful and great, for the love of it.

Such an existence, untainted by the low pleasures, low pains, low thoughts and intents that soil imperfect artists, should idealise those who lead it loyally.

The day was not over yet. A note was awaiting Val at the Villa Marta. The first thing he saw was the seal,—

'Sic itur ad astra.'

Three lines only: to fix the next sitting for the morrow. So sorry not to have seen him that afternoon. They had had some good music.

CHAPTER XVIII

SMOKE.

Soirée musicale at Prince Pumpnickel's. Prince Pumpnickel's parties are rare, and run after in proportion. Nothing under the superlative degree of excellence is admitted. The best rooms, best exotics, best refreshments, best music, and the best of all good company in Rome, here meet together. Who's who? is the question for all who do not know; for everybody is somebody; and in a city where the somebodies are mostly on their travels, there is no foretelling from day to day what star may be the next to dawn on the horizon.

Gervase came in half an-hour ago, and is drifting along the room, detained by one group after another, but never really losing sight of his goal, the piano in the distance. At the junction of the two rooms he meets Diana, installed on

a sofa, the best point for observing, and undergoing observation of which, as usual, she is a centre. It is not every charming woman who, like Lady Brereton, can be charming in four languages. Sir Adolphus was standing near; at such moments he envies no man living.

'You look ruffled,' she remarked to Gervase, as he stopped to speak. It was true, though she was the first to detect it. 'No more highway robberies, I hope?'

'God forbid!' ejaculated Gervase; his fervour startled her. He laughed and explained quickly, 'I have only to-day made an end of a prosecution, that was far worse than the assault.'

'They did get the right man then, after all?' put in Sir Adolphus, always a chapter or two behind the rest of the world in matters of contemporary history.

'Yes, yes, don't you recollect?' said Diana impatiently. 'He turned out to be a Socialist, a nineteenth-century bravo of the worst sort, didn't he, Gervase?'

'He seemed very well known to the police,' said Gervase, 'who have been according him a most flattering amount of attention for some years. The fact of his answering personally to the description I had given directed suspicion to him at first. He was found in the midst of a lot of vagabond associates, at a tavern on the Trastevere, declaiming that theft was no robbery, when he was arrested. A fellow they were certain to have had up, sooner or later, on a political charge, but who they scarcely expected would give them the pleasure of committing him on a criminal one.'

'Was the watch actually found in his possession?' asked Sir Adolphus.

'No; but a sum of money, of which he gave an account

that proved totally untrue. It remained for me to swear to his identity.'

'Rather a difficult matter,' remarked Sir Adolphus; 'a man you'd only seen once, for a moment, in the dusk, weeks ago.'

'The more so, as all these fellows look alike; the same cut of ragged hair and beard, an inch or two of grimy face, and the same look, halfbrutal ferocity, halfcowardice.'

'Couldn't he be induced to save you the trouble, by confessing everything?' asked Diana, with a careless laugh.

'No; he denied violently, assaulted the officers who arrested him, insulted the court and witnesses—myself in particular, whom he assailed with some of the choicest oaths the Italian language affords. There was an attempt at an *alibi*; but it broke down. His witnesses were all notorious scoundrels, ex-convicts and such honest subjects, men whose word would go for nothing in England, for less than nothing here, where you can get almost anybody to swear anything, for a consideration.'

'And you, did you swear to him?' asked Sir Adolphus, without malice.

'I affirmed that, to the best of my belief, it was the man who had assaulted me.'

'And the court?'

'Convicted him offhand.'

There was a pause. Sir Adolphus heaved a sigh of satisfaction and relief. Gervase's brow had contracted again, and he said constrainedly, 'The fellow's a rascal; still, when a matter of this sort hinges finally on a question of identity, it is a hard thing to speak positively, however positive you may feel.'

'Come, the man has clearly forfeited his liberty to the law, again and again, by propagating opinions to disturb the public

peace,' Sir Adolphus affirmed. 'The police had arrears to settle with him.'

'Perhaps. When afterwards I touched upon my doubts to one of the officials, he merely shrugged his shoulders, and replied, "Pooh! One cur the less, loose in the streets of Rome."'

Sir Adolphus frankly expressed his hearty concurrence in the sentiments of the police-sergeant, and turned away.

Diana laughed.

'Adolphus is really afraid of Socialists and those people. He would like to have them extirpated by some patent "killer," like rats or beetles. Don't you think particularly mild people generally keep one pet subject on which they can be—theoretically, at least—particularly inhuman?'

Gervase said, 'Then it is as well he was not present this afternoon to see Bruno Pagano, and hear the threats and imprecations of which I was the object.'

'Threats?' Diana looked up. 'This is getting sensational. Tell me.'

'After perjuring himself several times—he had not taken my watch, or drawn a knife against a defenceless man (it seems, however, that he began life by stabbing a fellow-student at school)—he announced his settled intention, as soon as he was a free agent again, to use a knife against me to some purpose.'

Diana shuddered.

'Why do you tell me such horrors?'

'By command,' he said, laughing. 'The incident created a little sensation in court, and might, I thought, amuse you.'

'How can you take it so coolly?'

'I was afraid from what you said that I looked upset,' he returned, rallying. 'I only hope that if I meet Bruno Pagano face to face a third time, it may be in the

highway, and not in the dock. Pray who is the lady in pink roses and fringe?'

The cousins, talking there, were the envied of all observers. Men confounded that fellow Damian, privileged *intime* of the English beauty. Women detested that haughty beauty, Lady Brereton, for monopolising the interesting *attaché*, concerning whom almost as many romances were at present current in Rome as of Laurence Therval, the violin-player, whom Prince Pumpnickel is at this moment leading to the piano.

Acquaintances saunter past Diana, glance at her, interceding for a nod of recognition. She pretends not to see. Mr. Romer comes up; she is still talking to Gervase; and, overlooked, he moves away to the piano, to exchange friendly greetings with the performer before she begins.

'Mdlle. Therval is looking her best to-night,' said Diana. 'Ah, so she knows Mr. Romer.'

'O yes, they are old acquaintances,' Gervase rejoined carelessly. 'Madame Araciel told me. They spun tops and bowled hoops together as children, and all that.'

'Indeed?'

The first notes of music imposed silence. Conversation may flow the faster and smoother to piano-forte accompaniment, but it is another thing when a violin is holding forth. To talk seems rude, not merely to the violinist, but to the violin, which addresses you in a distinct, direct manner, like an orator of more or less eloquence. Laurence soon kept her hearers silent for delight. Such music is an elixir that brightens the faculties, stirs, exhilarates, yet brings no dreaded reaction in its wake. Even Diana was momentarily carried away by the witchery of the thing. She thought of the story of the fisherboy who

listened one night on the shore to the wind-dances of the water-nixies, and afterwards wandered through the world with his violin, charming all mankind magically when he played them the melody of the Nix waltz.

She turned to say something of this to Gervase, but he was gone. Charmed away by the melody of the Nix dance.

Instead, Val Romer stood there. To his surprise she greeted him with distinct graciousness, asking with playful surprise,

'What, you leave the music to talk to me?'

'Well, I can't talk to the music, only listen,' he replied, with his incurable frankness.

'I see. So when you are quite tired of listening you come to me for conversation.'

'No; I came to you first, but you were engaged. Mr. Damian was telling you a story.'

Diana looked at him mischievously.

'Have you seen Prince Pumpernickel's new addition to his collection of pictures in the next room?' she asked. 'Faber's Medea. When we passed through there was so much crowd that I saw nothing but her headdress, which seemed to me very well done.'

'No; I haven't been to see the picture,' he said; 'will you like to come and look at it now?'

The music had drawn off every one. Medea in her tribune, a recess near the entrance to the suite, was deserted for the present. The little anteroom, where the picture hung on a large easel, afforded a distant view of the audience, and a distant hearing of Madame Araciel's song. Diana, fully as graceful and stately a picture as the queen on the canvas before her, placed herself on the ottoman. Val stood up by her side; both were looking atten-

tively at the painting as they talked.

'You wanted to know what Mr. Damian was telling me about,' said Diana. 'Highway robberies, Socialist murders, and other pleasant things.'

Val glanced at her with surprise. She had meant to surprise him. Diana found life tame sometimes, and there swept by a desire to singularise herself for a change. Why not? She could well afford it. 'O,' she pursued, with the same strange communicativeness, 'our conversation is always most prosaic, and unsentimental, and straightforward, *now*.'

The significance she contrived to throw into that little word 'now' would have galvanised curiosity in a clod. But there was no shade of coquetry or of embarrassment perceptible in her manner, no more than in his own.

'You mean it was not always so,' he said.

Diana assented in silence, and played with her fan. 'But that was long ago,' she remarked.

'What happened?' asked Val, still peering closely at the details of Medea's figure and gown and headgear, and making mechanical criticisms.

'He was my first-lover, do you know,' said Diana, with a cool disdain, just as indifferently as if she were speaking of her first ball.

'Was that all?'

She looked up amused.

'Was he my first love, do you mean? O no. That has still to come,' and the curl of her lip seemed to defy its advent; 'in the next world, perhaps. One should leave something over, for that,' she concluded.

Val seated himself on the ottoman, screened by the projecting wall of the recess. Diana was still looking at the picture, but he was looking at her now.

'It is an old story,' she said. 'I needed no magician to forecast my natural destiny; to tell me I should be sought for my fortune, and must beware lest I give my heart where my hand only was asked. Men are such good actors,' she laughed. 'My cousin' (she had never forgiven him for making her in love with him for a whole week) 'was known for an adept. It was said no woman could resist him, and the only thing wanted to prove it was the exception to the rule.'

'And you were the exception,' Val chimed in, smiling to himself.

'He had nothing, no clear prospects even, such as would satisfy my parents,' Diana continued; 'nothing to trust to but his power of inspiring a romantic infatuation in myself. Well, in those days, Mr. Romer, I vowed a strange vow,—that I would never give my heart and my hand together.'

Her eyes sparkled as she said it, an odd proud smile was on her lips. She fascinated him completely, with an influence of their own that charming, puzzling, non-beneficent things have now and then: in a word, the fascination of mystery.

'And that,' she concluded after a pause, 'is the history of my marriage.'

'You don't believe in love, then,' said Val philosophically by and by.

'No more.'

'And Medea?' he asked, rising and gazing at the canvas. 'We may suppose at least that she loved, in her way.'

'Medea was a woman; you must recollect it was of men I was speaking.'

'Well, perhaps you are right,' he said provokingly; 'only women can love rightly, and very few of those.'

'In Medea's manner?' she asked maliciously. Val looked displeased, and she hastened to add, in another tone, 'After all, the very same strong one feeling that drove her to crime might have led on another woman to heroic devotion. But men exist for themselves alone. Not a jot of their egotistical independence or advantage will they forego for a woman—though they adore her.'

'Don't say that,' he pleaded defencelessly. Her words seemed to carry a reproach; she contrived to speak them in a way that moved him in an extraordinary manner. Val realised that their acquaintance had taken a great leap onward. After that evening indifference was out of the question for him.

'Come, I think you have had enough of Medea,' she said, rising deliberately. 'Shall we go back to the music? I want to speak to Mdlla. Therval.'

Mdlla. Therval was gone, however. Gervase was at that moment putting her into the carriage.

'To-morrow at seven,' said Madame Araciel to him, as they drove off.

Gervase did not return to the party. He said to himself that if he were to lose his reputation in Rome as the 'glass of fashion,' he could not go back into that artificial atmosphere that night.

So he walked home to his lodgings on the Pincio in the cold clear moonlight. He had the moon to thank for Madame's invitation to dinner the next day. The lady's heart was set on making, with Laurence, the usual nocturnal excursions to ruins. Gervase had offered to be their escort. It was full moon to-morrow night.

The divine music, the still more divine few minutes' *tête-à-tête* with the musician, had wrought

an entire alteration in his mood. The dark impression of the afternoon had been effaced, unpleasant things had lost their power to tell. What a girl that was! what a soul! what a face!

'A face to lose youth for, to occupy age
With the thought of—meet death
with—'

Gervase checked himself, aghast. What on earth had he—a man of the world, a bit of a cynic—to do with the rhapsodies of poets and fanatics?

The next afternoon he was at a *café* on the Piazza di Spagna with two Roman friends. Their conversation turned upon Mdlle. Therval. Gervase took no part, listening quietly to some of his own thoughts spoken aloud by his companions as they extolled her beauty, her talents, her angelic disposition. Thence they came to disputing on the probable future in store for her. One wondered that she had not married. The other, who pretended to have superior information, returned with emphasis,

'That she never will. She has devoted herself to her art entirely, to the exclusion of other duties and interests, like a nun. Nothing can tempt her to forsake it.'

This statement was received with an incredulous murmur and smile.

'There is no woman,' said the sceptic, 'but would give up any profession or professional ambition for the man or the match she would like.'

'I know what I am saying,' replied the gentleman, who had taken on himself the office of Mdlle. Therval's mouthpiece, mysteriously. 'Not many weeks ago a nobleman, a millionaire, well known in society here, proposed to her to leave the musical profession to become his wife. Mdlle. Therval refused unhesitat-

ingly, telling him what I have told you.'

The Italian shook his head.

'If we are to believe all the *on dits* about a famous artist—'

'It is no *on dit*,' responded the other. 'I have it from himself; and between ourselves, I may tell you, it was that young Baron Miramar.'

Gervase, who was now listening sharply, gave a slight exclamation of surprise. He knew something of his unsuspected rival, who was not a nobleman exactly nor a millionaire, but simply a rich amateur, whose father, an Austrian banker, had bought the title his son had inherited together with a large fortune. He was a shy man, counted quixotic, and who might be expected to do odd things. That he should fall in love with Mdlle. Therval was natural; that he should desire to marry her was, if not quite so natural, merely a fresh proof of an erratic disposition, possibly of an origin no higher than hers! Gervase's own standpoint was far removed. Such a marriage of unreason was an idea about as entertainable to him as that of enlisting in the army. To break every tie he had formed in the past, destroy the harmony of his present existence, and upset all his hopes in the future—he must be mad first. He had rather more to lose in the way of the world's favour than Baron Miramar, and no fortune to fall back upon either.

Gervase left the *café* pondering on what he had heard with distinct satisfaction. Laurence Therval had refused a brilliant *parti*. The fact afforded him intense pleasure. But never had he been in less danger of forgetting that he was Gervase Damian, the ambitious son of an ambitious mother, playing the world's game, and due

at his post at a certain German Court a few months hence. It is true he avoided the consideration of these stubborn facts, but that was because the thought of them might have interfered with his enjoyment of his evening at the Piazza San Matteo. Had he not come to Rome to enjoy himself?

All day long Madame Araciél had been in a state of restless activity. Mr. Damian was coming to dine—quite quietly and *en famille*; but he was of those guests that hostesses delight to honour. Great pains had been taken to de-Bohemianise the room, and not without success. As a precautionary measure, Domenico had been packed off to bed early, and Cherubina only allowed to appear, bound over to her very best behaviour.

Gervase's conquest of Madame Araciél had been complete. Once let her get a good opinion of a man, and it became a matter of personal loyalty, which it was next to impossible to shake. She could read him like a book, she said confidently. He was a superior being, serious-minded, devoted to art, just like his cousin, Lady Brereton; an admirer of herself and her singing, and of Laurence and her playing, of course. He would also introduce them to all the great people in Rome; this was her heart's desire, which he had found out long ago.

Even Cherubina, who hates him, confesses that he is not as other men are. She expects to see him arrive in some preternatural way, and not walk in at the door, like Domenico or Mr. Romer. Her impressions are so far confirmed to-night, in that he appears announced by the landlady in person—an unheard-of piece of condescension on her part, which she has volunteered. She is very idle and very proud, and never

performs a duty but under protest for great or small. But the Roman matron has found her match. Women, young and old, gentle and simple, are always so charmingly obliging to Gervase. He can conjure amiability out of the veriest shrew. No wonder he likes women!

During dinner Madame Araciél, though she talked incessantly, was too careful and troubled about the serving thereof to be on the alert. Gervase might safely have spoken love to Laurence under her very eyes. Only Cherubina, silent to-night and quiet as a mouse, was noting every word and look that passed between the two more acutely than any duenna could have done. He did not speak love, certainly. O no! and the child could find absolutely no excuse for the wild feeling of hostility his presence evoked in her.

Cherubina, in the course of a nomad life, had seen a good deal of a good many sorts of people already. But this young *aristo*, with his responsive ways and ready tongue and quick delicate apprehension, was of another metal to those they familiarly associated with. She felt an unknown influence among them, and that it was strong. Whatever those two said to each other seemed to her to have the same strange ring. It was like singing the same song over in different keys. How bright Renza was to-night! Could any one help loving her?

Perhaps neither Laurence nor Mr. Damian felt keen upon sight-seeing when nine o'clock came; but Madame's heart was set on a moonlight drive, the promised *finale*. The carriage was at the door. Laurence had gone into the inner room to get her wraps, Cherubina following.

'Good-night,' she said; but Cherubina turned petulantly away. 'Cherubina child!'

Cherubina turned round the small cross face of a spoilt baby just going to cry; but on meeting Laurence's gaze her features relaxed, she smiled, and her vexation melted away in a smothered affectionate exclamation and caress.

But when the trio had driven off, Cherubina sat for a long while musing by the sitting-room windows. The candles were out, and the moonbeams cast ghostly shadows; but she was not nervous or superstitious. It was papa who was frightened in a thunderstorm, and could not bear to sleep in the dark.

An hour later she was still there, when some one suddenly knocked. She said, 'Come in,' thoughtlessly, and enter Mr. Valentine Romer.

He was on easy terms with them now, and quite accustomed to drop in, uninvited, at odd hours.

'Only you at home?' he said, surprised, and peering at the little maid, who advanced to shake hands ceremoniously, much dismayed at having to do the honours unsupported. 'I came late, thinking I should be sure to find the *madre*.'

'She and Laurence have gone out driving with friends,' said Cherubina, with a discretion worthy of riper years, 'to see the ruins and places by moonlight.'

'What friends?'

'Mr. Gervase Damian,' stiffly.

'Damian?' he seemed very much surprised—not pleased; but the thought, whatever it was, passed quickly. 'And they've left you alone in the dark. Aren't you afraid?'

'Nonsense!' said Cherubina vehemently. Val would treat her always as a child, and it angered her deeply.

'Well, here's a letter—I thought if they were out I might as well be my own postman. Can I trust you not to forget to deliver it?'

'Try,' she said.

'It's about the musical evenings we think of getting up at the Villa Marta,' he said. 'You must come too sometimes, won't you?'

Her face brightened.

'And Domenico and the dolls,' he added provokingly. 'I'm sure the dolls in your house are musical!' and the offended Cherubina must end with a laugh at his oddity.

'A funny little mortal that,' thought Val, as he went on his way homewards. A soft, small, caressable creature, like kittens and callow ducklings, yet endowed with human intelligence, must please. And there was a touch of spirit about this little woman, too.

Cherubina would have been very proud had she known she had occupied the great man's thoughts for three minutes. Her gloomy reverie was broken, at all events; she felt happy and good again. When the others came in at midnight the child was sleeping fast, with a smile on her lips; and she did not see Renza's face bending over her, or the new expression there would have brought back Cherubina's fear, and established it, although it was an expression of gladness.

QUIET MR. WORTHINGTON.

An Election Story.

'All very well, my dear,' said excellent Mr. Worthington, 'but election or no election, I should like some breakfast.'

'Breakfast!' cried his energetic wife; 'Belle and I had breakfast at seven. Of course you can have some now; but if we all waited breakfast until nine o'clock, I wonder where the *cause* would be.'

'Cause!' mumbled Mr. Worthington, as he aired his paper, and waited disconsolately for the comfortless meal he knew to be preparing. 'What a wonderfully *shaky cause* it must be, when wives and daughters have to breakfast at seven to support it!'

A fearful doubt shook the feathers in Mrs. Worthington's bonnet (she was dressed for canvassing).

'Mr. Worthington—James!'

'You may address me thus, love,' placidly responded her spouse. 'After twenty years of matrimony there can be no impropriety in your calling me "James."'

'You will not deceive me, James. You are Liberal?'

'Quite, my dear. There's the wagonette; don't give the horses cold standing.'

'Make haste, dear mamma,' cried the charming daughter, just putting her blooming face inside the door. 'You know how *much* we have before us.'

Mr. Worthington sauntered to the window to watch the departure.

'Liberal!' he soliloquised, with hands deep in his pockets; 'who is Liberal if I am not? I have stood dinners for all the snobs in the neighbourhood, and a few besides (specially imported to give *éclat* to the occasion); I have been button-holed by all the

moneyed cads for miles round. This has gratified my wife and daughter, and secured what my health requires—*quiet*; but that being attained, one thing is still my own—my vote. And when it isn't my own, why, I know whose it will be.'

At the door of a little chandler's shop stood the wagonette at half-past twelve.

'Mr. Mills ain't werry well, ma'am, but I can take any orders,' announced a round-faced young woman, who came out carrying a stout baby.

'Not well?' said Mrs. Worthington, in a tone of condescending pleasantry. 'He's well enough to give a vote, Mrs. Mills, isn't he?'

'No, ma'am; that's just what 'e ain't,' replied the rosy-cheeked solemnly; 'them wotes is wonderful trying.'

'But, Mrs. Mills, to such good customers as ourselves. Dear little fellow!' (to the stolid baby, who grabbed at the bonnet feathers.) 'Mr. Mills would, I am sure, be anxious to help in bringing in our party.'

'That's what Miss Flossy says, ma'am,' responded Mrs. Mills, with a helpless upraising of her fresh country countenance; 'and she be the Squire's darter, as deals 'ere reg'lar. They be for one party and you be for another; and both is sure as their party is the honly one as is worth 'aving. It's werry confusin', ma'am, and my poor Joe don't 'ardly know what to be at—'

'He should have a *conscience*, Mrs. Mills!' cried Mrs. Worthington, 'a conscience above all petty matters. He must *know* that the Liberal member will be his true lasting friend in Parliament. Tell

your husband to send me up twelve gallons of paraffine oil, and that I shall call on him on Thursday—polling-day.'

'*That ain't bribery!*' said the rosy-cheeked Mrs. Mills to her babe, as they watched the departing wagonette. '*That ain't corruption!* We'll send 'em up the hoil, and welcome; but your poor father's life at 'ome will be werry un'appy if 'e don't wote with Miss Flossy—bless 'er!'

Polling-day arrived. Mr. Worthington only required an unpretentious dog-cart in which to transport his body to the polling-booth. His wife and daughter were off early with the 'carriage,' in time to strengthen weak souls, and urge irresolute or ignorant voters to do their duty. Once more Mrs. Worthington stopped at the chandler's door.

'Mr. Mills in?' she asked, stepping briskly into the shop.

'I ain't sure, ma'am,' hesitatingly answered the wife.

'Pray inquire, Mrs. Mills; not a minute to lose!' cried Mrs. Worthington.

Flushed and disconcerted, Mrs. Mills visited her back parlour, and reappeared in a second.

'I don't see 'im, ma'am.' Nervousness or laughter subdued made her voice falter, and her face unnatural in its gravity.

Deeds, not words, were Mrs. Worthington's forte. She marched straight into the back parlour, and there beheld a still hot piece of boiled bacon feebly smoking on the table, two knives and forks resting unsatisfactorily on two unfinished plates, and a dish of greens and potatoes mutely protesting against not being devoured.

'He is in! you can't deceive me, he is in!' cried the lady-cavasser.

'I be,' responded a muffled but desperate voice; and a cupboard-

door opened, from which emerged little Mr. Mills, covered with dust, and breathless from suffocation.

'Is this the conduct of an *Englishman?*' exclaimed Mrs. Worthington bitterly, as she swooped down upon her victim, 'to feast on bacon and hide in cupboards when your country—your blessed country—is waiting for your vote!'

'Bless you, ma'am, *she* bean't a-waiting!' corrected the man, grinning sheepishly.

'What do you mean, man?' cried the matron severely. 'You know your vote is wanted immediately to save England from her enemies—'

'La, yes, ma'am,' interrupted the little chandler genially; 'but I've just been up to wote. Mr. Worthington came for me hisself.'

'Really? how good of you, Mr. Mills! So sorry to have interrupted you and your excellent wife at dinner;' and the lady bowed herself out.

A few hours later a goodly party assembled for dinner at Mr. Worthington's, and only Mr. Worthington looked happy.

'Papa, how can you be so unconcerned after our defeat?' asked Belle reproachfully.

'I'm not defeated, my dear,' cried Mr. Worthington, with a cheerful smile; '*my* man's in!'

Mrs. Worthington sprang from the armchair in which she had sorrowfully cast herself before.

'James—Mr. Worthington—is this fair to me?'

'Don't know, my dear; gave you money, carriages, dinners, in short, everything outside myself. You didn't want my *conscience*, did you?'

Mrs. Worthington wept.

Her daughter resolved never to marry a 'quiet man.'

JUST A PEEP AT SARK.

DURING the whole of the past wet, windy, wintry summer, I have been trying to get just a peep at Sark from my habitat in Jersey, for it had been drummed into me that failing a glimpse of the wee islet with its wondrous caverns, its *Coupée*, its *Creux Derrible*, and indeed its wild picturesque scenery generally, my stay in the Channel Islands, whether long or short, would, so far as sightseeing is concerned, go for nothing. But how to get readily to and from Sark, that has been the rub. I have not cared to cross to Guernsey, and thence to take passage in either the cutters or steamers that ply frequently between Peter's Port and Creux. To hire a boat from St. Heliers and sail over the few leagues of blue water separating the two islands, would have been a pleasant sea-outing if wind and waves could have been depended upon, but both these have been invariably high and boisterous; and besides I had S.'s misadventures off the Corbières and G.'s pull for life to reach land somewhere about Plemont as deterrents from the open-boat experiment. No, I would bide a time when the Rescue advertised so often to run from Grève de Lecq in Jersey to Sark, and as often prevented doing so from stress of weather, could hit upon such a white-stone occurrence as a favourable day, and so accomplish her trip. And lucky is it that I have bided, for this September morning, when the little steamship is again noted for an excursion, is about the bright-

est and most glorious that could come about, had even the Pike's Peak sages forecast it for our advantage.

St. Heliers is mostly abed at the early hour when I and some friends find ourselves mounted on one of those large heavy *char-à-bancs*, which are the institutional conveyances of the Jersey tourist. A score of passengers besides ourselves occupy the many seats of the cumbrous vehicle, the horses of which betray unmistakable signs of the wear and tear which a prosperous holiday season has brought upon them, and drag us slowly to Grève de Lecq, a pretty lobster port in the north-west corner of the island (Jersey), and the nearest point to Sark. I am terribly disappointed with the drive, not from any lack of beauty in the country through which we pass, for indeed that is lovely enough, but from the most unexpected and unlooked-for heaviness of heart, the dumps, and the reticence which possess the 'Arrys and Carrys, who, my own party excepted, compose our full coach load. I had known a something before of the 'rowdy' tendencies of these gentlemen and ladies while coaching about the island; I had heard their sallies of chaff either bandied about between themselves or launched at the unoffending passers-by; I had listened to their musical talents either in popular solos, or in choruses, when 'the amusing guides' obliged, and I had appreciated their proclivities as 'festive cusses,' but, honour bright, on

this day, and on the Paragon coach and four, no funeral party could have been more deadlively. Not a word worth hearing was uttered all through St. Lawrence; not a note was whistled or chirped all over St. Mary's; not a spark of cockney-born-and-bred waggery was flashed all along St. Ouen's; nothing emanated from the 'whole biling' all the way but the fumes of cheap brandy, the smoke of cheaper tobacco, and the perfume of home-made eau-de-Cologne. Perhaps it was too early for 'Arry to be in 'fetching form,' possibly, for the same reason too, the charming Carry was not up to the fascinating or to be fascinated mark. Both he and she were quite too awfully dull and stupid, and that phase of habitual ultravulgar cadism, as seen nine times out of ten on the top of a St. Heliers excursion car, and which, for a purpose, I had hoped this ride would have made me more intimately acquainted with, was, for the nonce, set aside.

Arrived at Grève de Lecq, we find our expected craft there before us, moored alongside a sort of pier or breakwater, and awaiting the contingent of very many excursionists. She looks small, and she is small; but when I casually remark on this apparent diminutiveness to B., one of us, a seafaring stander-by overhears me, and sneeringly observes that 'She is up to a-carrying twice as many on you *five-pounders*'—a local sobriquet for a week's summer snob visitor—'as is a-going this blessed morning.' It is the first piece of repartee I have heard, and it is refreshing, if not complimentary. My interfering respondent does not, however, vouchsafe to point out where on board the good little ship the 'twice as many on you' are to be stowed, the present human freight

being already so numerous that it jams up deck, paddle-boxes, bridge, rails, head, and every available inch of standing and sitting room. Doubled—and I'd rather be out than in the Rescue in any voyage.

Not without considerable difficulty and some clever handling do we manage to wriggle out of the shallow narrow harbour and to round the pier-head; but presently it is done, and then—hurrah!—we are on the open sea, which is in its very calmest and quietest of humours, so much so indeed that some 'Arrys come out of the dumps sharp, and begin to dance a double shuffle—a measure that does not call for much space—to the music of the band, while others strike up 'I'm afloat,' 'Nancy Lee,' and such-like nautical ditties. In less than an hour and a half—the distance is thirteen miles—Sark is reached; but long before that time it has been plainly in view, rising boldly and grandly from the haze that has settled on the sea. It looks as wild, as rocky, and as inhospitable as the most enthusiastic admirer of this sort of scenery could wish for. Its cliffs are high, vertical, rugged, without slopes or zigzags, down to the smallest fringes of pebbly or sandy shore. The faces of these perpendicular crags are seamed and serrated with veins and strata of coloured stone and earth; their bases are rent into fissures and clefts and caves of all sizes and shapes, and their summit is one flat plateau, on which we see patches of yellow corn brightening up a brown heathery surface. Such is the aspect of the Lilliputian island on its eastern side, such is its appearance in other directions; a terrible iron-bound coast, out-Heroding the Herod of the other Channel Islands in rocks

and reefs, rocks singly or in masses, rocks above the water, under the water, rocks here, there, and everywhere ; a perfect congress of rocks.

Under one of these towering promontories, and outside a kind of breakwater, the *Rescue* brings to, makes fast to a buoy, and Captain Lehon, her skipper, tells us 'that we are there.' But where? where? Bar the breakwater, on which there are standing a stray nursemaid or two with perambulators, and bar a few boats with boatmen ready to board us, there is not a vestige of the stir and bustle of life. From that breakwater, the length of which we can nearly see, there appears no exit landwards, the cliff seems effectually to barricade that. Where is Creux harbour? where is the town, or, to be more moderate, the village, or even the hamlet of Creux? Are there no shops or stalls or other outward and visible signs of some sorts of trade and employment? Where is even the ever-to-the-fore and prominent 'pub'? Nowhere! The boats, in which we shall presently land, rounding the head of the breakwater, will take us through a narrow entrance into the most minute of tiny bays, will put us ashore at some stairs, we shall walk a short distance along the roadway of the said pier, we shall pass through a tunnel cut in the solid granite cliff, that cliff which has been mentioned as forming the background and barrier of the scene, and then we shall enter, so to speak, upon the depth and breadth and emptiness of the land of Sark.

A story is told that, once upon a time, the rulers of the Queen's *Navee* visited Sark, were piloted without mishap to the little harbour we have been endeavouring to describe, and were landed; but, seeing no one about, not even the

boats and the two perambulators, with their attendants who greeted our arrival, and being unable to discover any practicable means of penetrating into the interior of the country, except by scrambling over the towering crag—a feat too much for even the sailor lords—went away again quite uninformed of the object with which they came. I am afraid that the tale is apocryphal; for even before the tunnel was made there was a natural Creux, or hole, through the rocks leading landwards; so at least tradition says.

But to return to ourselves. We have followed the ruck of the passengers ashore; we have walked along the out-jutting pier, getting therefrom a striking glance of the majestic rocky crags in front; we have passed through the cutting, which is more useful than grand, and now we have emerged upon a hot and dusty and up-hill road, along which we toil, with grass-fields, corn-fields, root-fields, orchards on either hand—Sark, like all the Channel Islands, is studiously cultivated—until we arrive at a cosy-looking, clean, bright-painted sort of an hotel, in the 'outworks' of which many of our fellow 'Arrys are already established over glasses and mugs of their 'particular wanities.' We do not join these revellers, but, under the guidance of André, an island aboriginal, who, according to his own telling, is a jack-of-all-trades, the sailor predominating, we begin at once to take time by the firelock, as Captain Malaprop of Ours used to say, and to lionise.

First we see the church, quite a modern structure of 1820, and quite as ugly outside as the greatest stickler for uncomely church architecture could desire. Inside, a liberal display of the charms of very red brick, very white mortar, and very black peb-

bles, with a few panes of coloured glass, have lightened up, if not improved, its appearance. Peering around its grave-yard, I come upon the tombs of some of the noble and time-honoured Channel Islands name of De Carteret, and I ask our guide, philosopher, and friend how they come to be interred here. Of course he does not know, 'it was before my time,' but, subsequently, I find out the why and wherefore, and this is it.

In 1582 Sark was given by Queen Elizabeth to Hilaire de Carteret, Seigneur of the manor of St. Ouen in Jersey, to have and to hold in fief, and one of the accredited stories of the reason for the Virgin Queen's gift is thus recorded.

So little was the island known or thought about, among its sisters of the group, that certain Norman adventurers had, for a long time, occupied and held it as their own. It was useless attempting to displace them *vi et armis*; there was no getting at them behind the bulwarks of their inaccessible rocks. At last a worthy, said to be a Hollander in Queen Bess's service, hit upon the following *ruse*. He came with a single ship, anchored off the coast, and representing that he had a death on board, asked permission to bury the body in the consecrated ground of the island's little chapel. In return for this concession the islanders might come and take from his vessel anything they chose. Granted; but this stipulation attached, that no sailor from the craft disembarked with a weapon more formidable than his clasp-knife. Then a coffin was brought ashore, a large funeral party escorting it most carefully searched, and being found to have complied with the conditions in regard to arms, were allowed to proceed with,

and 'indeed assisted in, their mournful duty. While this was going on a number of the residents went on board to pick and choose the promised gift, but on stepping over the gangway were overpowered and noiselessly murdered. The coffin, meantime, arrived at the cemetery, its escort wrenched it open and armed themselves with swords and pistols, which, instead of a corpse, it contained. With these they fell upon and slaughtered the scared people, some of whom rushing down to shore were met by the red-handed crew of the ship, and shared the same fate. Finally, finding resistance useless, they yielded, the Dutchman took possession, and ceded the prize to its rightful owner, the British Crown. It was to prevent a similar stratagem—very like the wooden horse of Troy—that, as said before, Sark was added to the Seigneurie of St. Ouen.*

From the precincts of the church we stroll to the Manor House or Seigneurie, now in possession of the Reverend Mr. C., pastor, seneschal, commander, and Caleb Quotem of the land. He is the parish priest, the judge, the colonel of the island's militia, and has almost a sinecure in his triad capacities, for the very few inhabitants the census of Sark shows can't be always needing his offices for marriages and births; they don't die, for there is no doctor among them; they are not querulous, for a jail of some years' standing has never been occupied; and although they do possess three officers and some two score men as a local militia, their predilections can't be warlike, when anent this soldiery there drop such words as 'tomfoolery and

* There is a gun on the lawn of the Seigneurie inscribed as a gift from Elizabeth to the Seigneur of Sark.

nonsense' from the lips of our sagacious *cicerone*.

Into the lovely grounds of the Seigneurie, past the quaint old-fashioned Manor House itself, by its beacon tower, we stroll without let or hindrance; and through a sloping glade, soft with green springy turf, we pass westward towards Le Moulin, a lofty promontory, where we were greeted with a view so charming that I must needs try and depict it. We stand on the very edge of a high granite cliff. Sheer down below us, two hundred and more of feet, is the blue sea just rippled by the lightest of breezes. To our right are those singular rocks called Les Autelets, or little altars, pinnacles of massive gray granite springing isolated out of the ocean. To the left is the Ile des Marchands, as high, or higher, than the main land we are on, and separated from it by the narrow Passage de Gouliot, in which lie the world-famed caves of the same name—caves described by a modern writer 'as the wildest and maddest freak of the fantastic workmanship of the sea.' Unfortunately the tide did not serve for even the hastiest peep at their grandeur; a Lilliputian counterpart seen elsewhere, though wild and imposing enough, could give us but a faint idea of the size and shape and sublimity of the chambers and passages of the Gouliot caverns, and we were forced to accept a poor recital of their wondrous charms from our guide; but if the reader wants to know all about them, let him read the *Doctor's Dilemma*, by Hesba Stretton.

But the scene to our front remains yet to be pictured. Close by are the islets of Herm and Jethon, with their outlying sandbanks and reefs; beyond these is Guernsey, with Peter's Port brought so near through the tele-

scope, that fancy led some of us to declare that its 'Sixties and Forties'—the subdivisions of that island's society—could be seen sunning themselves on its jetty; and away there in the far distance the Casquet Rocks with their triple lighthouses. Altogether the *coup d'œil* is so fascinating that I have considerable trouble in tearing my companions from it—lunch, though, might have had something to do with the lingering—and I have to sound 'boots and saddles' many times before they will stir.

But at last we go, and bend our steps southwards towards Le Coupée, that natural causeway, which at a height of three hundred feet, perpendicularly down on either side to the sea, joins Great Sark to Little Sark. Grand it certainly is, giddy too it turns you standing on the rocky pathway with precipices right and left, but still I am disappointed with it. I had pictured to myself a very narrow goat-track, on which footsteps had to be picked and guarded. I had recollected the legend of the bottle-loving dwarf who, before being allowed to leave his host in Little Sark for his home in Great Sark after an evening's booze, was tested as to his capability of doing the Coupée by his steadiness in walking along the narrower gauge of an old-fashioned cannon. If he accomplished that test, good; his head and his legs were equal to the less contracted isthmus—he could go; but if he staggered and fell off the gun he was drunk and incapable, and must be kept for the night. But whatever Le Coupée was in the days of the story, it is now broad, smooth, and safe enough, and our friend the pigmy would have been very, very *fou* indeed not to pass across in security. Little Sark is a bold promontory on which there are a few small

farms, and an unworked silver mine—unworked because the game is not worth the candle, and has ruined its speculators.

If my labour had been great in withdrawing my friends from the vicinity of Le Moulin, I have got it here redoubled. They have settled down into the long grass and scented heather that clothe a slope on the Great Sark side of the cliff. It is, they declare, 'feather-beddy'; the view is even more lovely than the one that just now attracted them—which, indeed, it is not—the sea-breeze is welcome and refreshing, and there is a dreamy *dolce-far-niente* enticement in remaining in this nook until it is time to rejoin the Rescue. Besides, they go on to point out, the lesson in snobbery I failed to gain on the top of the *char-à-banc* may be well learnt here; for don't I see close by a batch of our St. Heliers friends, enjoying themselves with all the *verve* and *abandon* which 'am, cold 'ard heggs, bitter beer, and bird's-hey inspire. I do; but if we bide at Le Coupée what about the lion of Sark, Le Creux du Derrible? We can't go without seeing him. 'Omne ignotum pro magifico,' says the most classical and most lazy of our party. 'I can imagine everything about the big, deep, dark, old hole,' adds another. 'All the Sark horses, and all the Sark men, don't move me from this claret cup and backy,' puts in a third. But one little lady's curiosity overcomes her fatigue, and she and I and André trudge off to inspect this Creux du Derrible, or Terrible, as by the latter name it is often improperly called. It is, as is perhaps known, a large wide natural opening or shaft, its mouth gaping from a field of gorse and heather, and not seen until its very edge is almost trod upon; its base is fathoms upon

fathoms down upon a circle of shingly beach fringed with rocks. Its bare rugged walls are vertical; two cavernous apertures, through which the tide rushes at high water, then convert the bottom of the shaft into a trough of deep sea; but at ebb-it is dry and pebbly as we now see it. Brambles and coarse vegetation straggle around the embouchure; but not a trace even of a lichen can I perceive on the rough seamed sides; indeed, I can't look down long, for

'How fearful

And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low!'

and I am obliged to content myself with short and hurried glances. André aforesaid tells us that it is impossible to reach the bottom of this pit of Acheron from the land surface, though boats can, and do, get in through the reefs before told of—he has himself done so many times. But in the former part of his statement he is wrong. Professor Ansted and Dr. Latham, in their exhaustive work on the Channel Islands, write 'that it is possible, but not very easy, to make a descent by a narrow winding path to the brink of the cliff, down which, by the aid of some iron rings fastened to the rock, the bay into which the Creux opens can be reached.'

And now it is time to return to the pier, Jersey-bound again. We reëmbark on the steamer, which has taken in still more souls than she brought, and which now shapes a course homewards. The band aboard plays more loudly and lively, for a largesse of small coin awaits it. 'Arry is now becoming momentarily more excited and noisy, and striving to earn another local nickname he has of a 'Live, O!' He dances wildly on even less deck space than he had on the outward voyage; he

sings with stentorian lungs a popular ditty descriptive of Jersey, in which, among other scraps of valuable information, he tells us that 'it is not on the banks of the Mersey.' He conducts a mock orchestra, his *bâton* being the thickest of 'cabbage sticks;' he caricatures his few more quiet and reserved fellow-passengers, and, in conjunction with Miss Carry, he gives gratis, free, for nothing, practical lessons in the art of spooning to those who choose to look on him. At Grève de Lecq the cloven foot is shown. He has established himself on the seats of the car by which I and my party

came, and he vows that no (powerful adjective) swell man or woman shall put him off. 'Nor that they sh'a'nt,' adds Carry, beside him, and, to give force to the resolve, closely links her fair arm within that of the vaunting swain. We have half a mind to try conclusions, but the lady element with us is an effectual stopper to such a proceeding. So we retire, leaving 'Arry chuckling, and literally and metaphorically master of the situation. We seek another vehicle, and are soon out of his way, and on the high road to St. Heliers.

• THAT DREAM OF OURS.

O, THE young love was sweet, dear,
 That dainty dream of ours,
 When we could not keep our feet, dear,
 From dancing through the flow'rs;
 When hopes and gay romances
 Were thick as leaves in spring,
 And cares were old folks' fancies,
 And joy the solid thing.
 Of all youth's visions blest, dear,
 Of all its golden dow'rs,
 O, the young love was best, dear,
 That dainty dream of ours!

O, the old love is sweet, dear,
 These chill October days,
 When we tread with faltering feet, dear,
 The sere and silent ways.
 When earth has lost its glory,
 And heav'n has lost its blue,
 And life's a sober story,
 And care a comrade true.
 Though hopes no longer cheat, dear,
 And dreams have lost their sway,
 O, the old love is sweet, dear,
 That gilds the Autumn day!

THE SKETCHER IN THE SUBURBS.

By W. W. FENN, AUTHOR OF 'HALF-HOURS OF BLIND MAN'S HOLIDAY.'

HAMPSTEAD HEATH.

To go farther and fare worse is the fate constantly attending the footsteps of the landscape-painter in his search for subjects, and Hampstead Heath is a pertinent illustration of this fact to all who have overlooked the healthy and beautiful suburb. Travelling far and wide, it would be difficult to find a region richer in its way for purposes pictorial than this cockney playground, and ever since Londoners first took to landscape-painting it must have been a veritable mine of wealth to them. Notwithstanding the advance of bricks and mortar upon it from all sides, there is still to be found, amidst its gravelly broken undulations, its furze-clad knolls, grassy slopes, and leafy groves, studies of foreground and trees hard to beat; whilst the far-reaching stretches and peeps of blue distance supply examples of pure English scenery not to be easily surpassed. Let it not be supposed that because donkey-riding and holiday-making flourish there that no seclusion is to be had. I know of nooks and corners, dingly dells, and bosky bowers where one may establish the easel, and plant the white umbrella, and sit through the live-long day in as much retirement as if London were fifty, instead of five, miles off. Diverging to the left from the straight ridge of high-road running between Jack Straw's Castle and the Spaniards, and winding our way down amongst the broken ground until the lower skirts of the heath are reached, we come upon hedge-

rows and by-lanes leading to the farm meadows, where at the right season any amount of wild herbage and general rural greenery may be found. Here and there a log or two of felled timber may not unfrequently be seen dragged to the side of lane or path, and left there sufficiently long for winter and rough weather to have cast over them a film of mossy picturesqueness, softening the outline, and harmoniously varying the colour; and for the lush grass to have grown high about their flanks, and to droop its silvery seed-pods in graceful arches across the rich-toned furrowed bark. Deep cart-ruts, old gates, gnarled, twisted, and stunted oaks, abound; and in the neighbourhood of a certain farm which I have in mind, a host of 'bits,' invaluable as foreground studies, turn up occasionally, if we have luck, in the shape of a plough, or harrow, or disused cart driven back into the hedge.

All along this dip by the edge of the heath the most perfect retirement is obtainable. It is indeed complete country, with no sight, sound, nor scent that does not harmonise with the surroundings. Returning upwards over the heath, looking forward or backward, right or left, every variety of broken ground, with here and there a reedy pool, and patches of wild bramble, gorse, and fern, offers itself temptingly to the artist's eye. Then still higher, and passing many a group of picturesque trees, we reach the extremity of the heath, to come upon

that rare avenue of century-old Scotch firs, with their wonderfully beautiful rugged outlines and rich colour, and their tortuous snake-like roots protruding in every direction amidst the sandy gravelly pits and ridges. Again, still on the same side of the heath, but nearer to the North End Road, upon the sloping ground by the fringe of the little pale-in copses, there are innumerable shady corners where the camp-stool may be pitched in the very centre of fine 'stuff.' Or if, emerging from amidst the quaint old red-bricked habitations standing within their own garden-walls, we come from the town out upon the heath at its highest point by the big pond and tall flag-staff, we get a distant landscape which gives no hint of our suburban standpoint.

There before us lies Harrow-on-the-Hill, the tiny spire conspicuous as the apex of the knoll, and the waters of Hendon lake, supplying that silvery thread or patch of glittering sheen without which the warp and woof of no rural view is said to be complete. Before us, at our feet again, the broken undulations of the heath lead pleasantly into the picture; and once more dropping down to wander amongst these, we shall come upon most valuable studies at every turn.

Reaching, as we shall, by this line of country, the suburb of the suburb, North End, many a sketchable point and incident will be revealed. Even the steep descent by the road to this place from Jack Straw's is, to those who feel it properly, quite romantic, although it is only a common highway. The tall broken bank to the right, fringed at the top with its ragged hanging wood, and the post and rail on the raised pathway to the left, shut it in, and lead the eye downward to the

cottages and the smoke curling up amid the tall trees which end the vista. Most paintable too are the avenues and groups formed by these same trees; whilst the glimpses of old red-tiled roofs, gable-ends, queer chimneys, lichen-covered garden-walls, and overhanging shrubberies seen through them and intermingling with them, lend additional character and interest to the subject.

On the Vale of Health or eastern side of the heath there is less, perhaps, of what the artist looks for than on that which we have just left. Still there are bits to be had of an up-and-down and in-and-out character by no means despicable, to say nothing of the wondrous view of London anywhere hereabouts presented. Naturally much depends in dealing with a theme of this magnitude on weather, light, and atmosphere; but I have seen the mighty Babylon from this point look well-nigh as grand and inspiring for the painter as Rome itself: the dome of St. Paul's lending at this distance, to imaginative minds, a kind of suggestive similarity.

Penetrating the byways and outskirts of the town of Hampstead, lying on this eastward slope, innumerable opportunities open for the exercise of the pencil. Looking Londonwards, so that peeps of the City are visible, there is again, occasionally, quite a foreign tone of form, colour, and composition about many of the queer old buttressed walls, corners and ends of buildings, clock-turrets, shrubberies, and old-world trees, as they come against the distance. This feeling may easily be fostered, if we let our memory dwell upon some of the associations which render this region classic ground. Well Walk, with its avenue of fine old limes, long raised level path looking to the

south, and the much-desecrated old Well itself, is not far off; and here, shortly before he went to Rome, where his ashes now lie hard by the pyramid of Caius Cestius, John Keats lived. Here he wrote his 'Ode to the Nightingale,' 'Endymion,' and the 'Eve of St. Agnes;' and here Coleridge visited him, as also did Hone of the *Every-day Book*. A host of poetic and pictorial memories, near and remote, cling to the spot: Mansfield and Pope, according to Cowper, loved it. The mother of our own Tennyson died in Well Walk, as did that prince of landscape-painters, Constable, who used to declare that he loved every stump, stile, and lane in the village, and that as long as his hand could hold a brush he would never cease to paint them.

Clarkson Stanfield selected Hampstead as the fittest and most harmonious place in which to spend the autumn of his laborious life; and it seems but yesterday that I used not unfrequently to come across him, seated in some quiet corner round about these outskirts of the town, or away down amongst the gravel-pits and sylvan groves aforesaid, sketching with all the earnestness and devotion to be looked for amongst mere tyros in the art rather than amongst veterans such as he. But it is the veteran in art, after all, who knows best where to pitch his tent for the pursuance and study of a profession that is never learned; and with examples such as his, and of others no less notable who have gone before him, we need not hesitate now and then to follow on the track which their footsteps have worn into a well-marked path, albeit it lead no farther than the breezy north-western height. Very easy, indeed, is it to fare worse; and although we know that it is still

the favourite haunt and residence of numerous brethren of the brush, and though the white umbrella is a common sight, I am happy to think, still, among the slopes and hollows of the furzy heath, there is a danger in these impetuous far-travelling days of this suburban sketching-ground being estimated at much below its real worth; and it is very desirable to remind our painters from time to time of the invaluable hoard of picturesque beauty lying so immediately within their reach.

Were any farther argument needed to show why Hampstead should not be overlooked by the sketcher, it can be found in the fact that, despite the means which have been taken to intercept his greatest enemy, the modern builder, each year leaves ugly evidence of the devastating advance of bricks and mortar, and sooner or later the last traces of the suburb as a sketching-ground will probably disappear.

Within the past twelve months only the beautiful avenue of old limes in the aforesaid Well Walk has been threatened by the axe of the ruthless demon of improvement; nay, for aught I know, is even now threatened. Slowly, but surely, after some fashion he drives the thin edge of his pernicious wedge into many a rural retreat. Rood by rood only it may be that the mischief is done, but done it is. Advantage is taken of any accidental opportunity: an old tree, for instance, is blown down and has to be rooted up; then the raised path where it has grown for a century and more can be levelled, and will perhaps be paved. This process, likely enough, eventually saps the foundation of the old moss-grown wall hard by, which begins to bulge, and must of necessity be buttressed up with new brick, or pulled down; and,

if it does not fall in, the lease of the house on its other side does, and lo, within a month or two the whole of the quaint old corner, with its winding irregular approaches and surroundings, is swept away, trees and all, and we have in its place a modern staring stuccoed villa, with cast-iron railings and levelled walks, defiant of all the artists in Christendom.

Fit is it, therefore, that our age, with its wide-spread graphic powers, should leave records of what yet remains of the picturesque in the neighbourhood, even if it were to serve no higher purpose than that of aiding the future topographical historian, and of showing posterity how, by degrees, the great city overgrew it-

self. It is often urged upon figure-painters that it is their duty, Hogarth-like, to paint the subjects of their day, that they may be historians as well as artists. Undoubtedly there is great reason in such views, for by brush and pencil, far more than by the pen alone, can the *vraisemblance* of certain facts be perpetuated; and if this hold good for those who deal with animate nature, so must it be for those who deal with inanimate. A background true in its local colour, in the widest sense of that expression, is no less essential for a complete historical picture, than the costumes and accessories of the personages who make history; and this background it is assuredly one of the functions of the landscape-painter to secure.





A WONDERFUL WOMAN.

LONDON SOCIETY.

JUNE 1880.

FORTUNES MADE IN BUSINESS.

XVIII.

THE FORTUNES OF THE BRIGHT FAMILY.

IN the year 1796 there sallied forth from a Derbyshire farmhouse a young man, plain of attire and frank and open of countenance, bent upon seeking his living in the rapidly-developing cotton districts of the County Palatine. The young man's name was Jacob Bright. He was the youngest son of Jacob and Martha Bright, an esteemed Quaker couple who had then been dead some years. Jacob Bright had learned the art of handloom weaving in the house of a Derbyshire farmer, who lived at the village of New Mills, and who, in a very modest way, combined the agricultural and the manufacturing pursuits, farming a few humble acres and owning three or four looms. William Tew was the fellow-apprentice of Jacob Bright at New Mills; and when they were both out of their time, they started off together to go to Lancashire, their joint purse amounting to no more than about ten shillings. 'At that time,' said his son, Mr. John Bright, speaking many years afterwards to a Rochdale audience, 'the Government of England was engaged in a tremendous war with the French Republic. The Go-

vernment of England was shedding the blood of its people as though it were but water, and squandering its treasure as though it had not been accumulated by the painful labour and the sweat of the population of this kingdom; and trade was very bad, and wages were very low, and six shillings a week was all that a handloom weaver at that time could earn.' This was a sorry state of things undoubtedly; but there were those who were able to see beyond the troubled cloud that then weighed upon the commercial atmosphere, and who could, in spite of all, buoy themselves up with high aims and ambitions. Such a one was Jacob Bright, who, as the days wore on, and he toiled at his loom from morn till night, for the miserable remuneration of a shilling a day, took every available means of improving his knowledge and laying the foundations of a successful business career. Despite the great depression caused by the war, the cotton manufacture was making remarkable progress, in the way of acquiring fresh mechanical facilities. The inventions of Arkwright, Hargreaves, and Crompton

ton had begun to tell with marvellous effect upon this important branch of our textile industries, and a time of peace was all that was wanted to bring to the cotton manufacturers a good and a prosperous trade. From 1771 to 1781 there had been an increase of 76 per cent in the consumption of cotton wool, while from 1781 to 1791 the increase had been 320 per cent. Indeed, the impetus that had been given to the cotton industry a few years prior to Jacob Bright's entrance into Lancashire was something altogether unparalleled in the history of commerce. The muslins of India had been superseded to such an extent by the muslins of Bolton that the directors of the East India Company accounted for the falling off of their revenue in 1793 by stating that British muslins, equal in appearance to those of India, and more elegant in pattern, could then be produced for one-fourth, or perhaps more than one-third, less in price. Those were the cotton weavers' palmiest days. Those were the days when young Jacob Bright was bound apprentice to the art; when Bolton muslin-weavers were paid 'four guineas for weaving a piece of six-quarter-wide muslin, with 120 picks to the inch.' In recent times we have read strange stories of the luxurious whims and extravagances of the collier; but these were more than matched by the expensive vagaries of the muslin-weaver of the particular period we are referring to, when 'the weavers,' we are told, 'brought home their work in top-boots and ruffled shirts, carried a cane, and in some cases took a coach.' It was not unusual for them to indulge their vanity to the length of sticking five-pound notes in their hats. This was very different from having to be content

with six shillings for a week's earnings, as the condition of things was when Jacob Bright was out of his apprenticeship, and went to Lancashire and obtained employment as a weaver.

It was not long, however, before Jacob Bright, by his diligence and integrity, worked himself into an improved position. Messrs. John & William Holme took him into their service as bookkeeper, and for several years he devoted himself with great assiduity to the advancement of their interests. Little by little, increased opportunities were given him of displaying his business aptitude, and in time Messrs. Holme promoted him to the responsible post of salesman. So well did he serve them in this capacity that they ultimately rewarded him with a partnership, and, like the heroes of the old story-books, he obtained the further honour of marrying a member of his employers' family. Miss Sophia Holme, his masters' sister, was a faithful and loving wife to the young Quaker salesman; and when they set up house-keeping, in a plain and homely fashion, in a cottage in Toad-lane, Rochdale, there were few happier couples to be found in the whole of the cotton district.

The year 1802 was an eventful one for Mr. Jacob Bright. In that year he, in conjunction with his brother-in-law and three other gentlemen (Messrs. John Taylor, James Butterworth, and William Midgley), built a mill which was called the Hanging-road factory. This was the second factory in Rochdale and the neighbourhood which was set to work in cotton-spinning. It was while engaged in building up a business at Hanging-road factory that in 1806 he had the misfortune to lose his wife, who died childless at the early age of twenty-eight. This un-

happy occurrence caused him to give himself up more unreservedly to business than ever, and during the next few years he made considerable headway with his commercial undertaking, and became one of the most familiar figures in the Manchester market. On market-days he used to drive to and from Manchester in a gig, and as time went on he contrived to make these weekly journeys serve a double purpose. There was a young Quakeress living at Bolton at that time, into whose society he had been occasionally thrown, and for whom he conceived a strong attachment. The young lady reciprocated the feeling, and was nothing loth to see the handsome Rochdale spinner drive through Bolton week by week, on his return from Manchester market, for the purpose of calling upon her. Her name was Martha Wood, and she was the daughter of a much-esteemed Bolton tradesman. Jacob Bright prospered alike in his wooing and in his business; for in 1809 he not only took to wife Miss Martha Wood, but removed his spinning frames to an old mill on Cronkeyshaw, called Greenbank. 'Some friends of his in Manchester,' said Mr. John Bright, in the speech before referred to, 'who were in business there as commission agents, seeing his aptitude for business, and believing in his honourable character, found the capital which was necessary to begin operations in that mill; and about the end of the year 1809 the old steam-engine which was put down there by Boulton & Watt of Birmingham, nobody knows hardly how long since, first turned round to spin cotton in that old mill.'

Thenceforward Jacob Bright's business was carried on on a more extensive scale, and the former weaver's apprentice grew to be a

man of wide responsibilities and great local importance. Deep earnestness, a capacity for viewing the most complicated or most exciting of business matters with a calm and philosophic spirit, and a sincere solicitude for the welfare of his workpeople, were the prominent features of his character, and many are the tales that are told illustrative of his kindness of heart and resoluteness of will. From the earliest period of his career as a mill proprietor he took a firm stand against the payment of church rates, a yielding to which he considered would involve the sacrifice of a great moral principle on his part; so, year after year, from 1811 down to a late period of his life, he suffered the parochial authorities to levy distresses upon his goods and chattels for the amount of each successive claim, and in this way, rightly or wrongly, protested against what he believed to be a grievous injustice. It was one of the chief aims of Jacob Bright's life to act honourably towards his neighbours, and he was as exacting in the rendering as in the demanding of justice. A story with a quaint old-world flavour about it is told of the Quaker cotton-spinner and his Solomon-like mode of delivering judgment in cases which his neighbours brought before him in an informal way. Some pigs belonging to a certain Mrs. Ann Jones used to be put out to feed on Cronkeyshaw Common; but, prompted by a desire for better fare, they were in the habit of straying into Mr. Bright's garden, much to the annoyance of the man-servant, Samuel Sheriff. Samuel expelled the swine from time to time in his own rough way; and one day, his patience being exhausted, he gave one of the pigs such a tremendous blow with a stick as

to render the hind legs of the animal completely useless. Mrs. Jones appealed to Mr. Bright to give her justice; and Mr. Bright summoned Samuel, the pig, and Mrs. Jones before him *in propria personæ*; and after hearing all the evidence, and considering the arguments brought forward on either side, summed up to the effect that Mrs. Jones had been to blame for permitting her pigs to trespass in the garden after repeated warnings, and that Samuel had no right to deal the pig so hurtful a blow. His award was that the animal should be slaughtered and divided into two parts, Mrs. Jones to retain the undamaged half, and Samuel to take the wounded half, paying Mrs. Jones for it at the then market price of pork. Mrs. Jones was thus insured of the value of the pig, and, at the same time, Samuel, though ordered to pay a sum of money, had the satisfaction of having his money's-worth of eating.

Greenbank was the place of residence as well as the place of business of Jacob Bright in these early days of the century; and the public mind was so greatly agitated with the business of military slaughter, that it had little thought for the business of spinning and manufacturing. Nevertheless Jacob Bright held tenaciously to his post, and, while ever ready to sympathise with and aid the distressed workpeople, he preserved an attitude of independence which gained for him the respect of all classes of the community. Meanwhile a family was growing up around him. On the 16th of November 1811, his eldest son, now the Right Honourable John Bright, was born, and between that time and the end of 1826 nine more children were born to him. Sophia, born in 1813, married Mr. Thomas Ashworth of

Poynton, and died in 1844. Thomas, the second son, was born in 1814, and is at the present time the managing partner of the business founded by his father. Priscilla was born in 1815 and married Mr. Duncan MacLaren, M.P. for Edinburgh. Benjamin, born in 1817, died at the age of twenty-eight, at Graefenberg, in 1845. Margaret, born in 1818, was married to Mr. S. Lucas, and is now a widow, and devotes herself with much zeal to the advancement of the temperance cause. Esther, born in 1820, was married to Mr. Vaughan, now one of the metropolitan magistrates; she died in 1850. Jacob was born on the 26th May 1821, and is now M.P. for Manchester. Gratton, born in 1823, died in 1853 at Bologna, and was buried in the Protestant cemetery there. Samuel, the youngest child, was born in 1826, and died at Geneva in 1873. The only surviving sons now are Mr. John Bright, Mr. Thomas Bright, and Mr. Jacob Bright.

In many respects Mr. Jacob Bright (the elder) was a model employer. During the many years that he continued at the head of the firm the factory system was at its worst, the wise protective enactments which have since been made by the Legislature on behalf of factory women and children having then hardly been so much as thought of. The workers were then the slaves of the masters, and oppression had sunk deep into their hearts. The cotton lords of those times did not always, in their race for wealth, stop to consider the wear and tear of human lives going on around them, and of which their insatiate greed was the cause; they only thought of the profit that could be wrung from the prolonged daily toil of their work-

people, and took no note of the 'weariness, the fever, and the fret' which counted against them in the moral reckoning. Jacob Bright was the reverse of all this. To his workpeople he was much more than a mere employer of labour. He was their friend and adviser, one whom they looked up to in the time of difficulty, and whose good word they deemed it a privilege to possess. Mr. W. Robertson, who has written a biography of Mr. John Bright, to which we are indebted for various facts stated in this article, tells us how Mr. Jacob Bright would take his stand at the mill-gates on a winter's night, with a lantern in his hand, and a thick overcoat wrapped tightly round him, and as his workpeople trooped out of the factory would give the children into the charge of their elders with instructions that they should be seen safe home. In taking his walks about the mill during working hours, it is also said, he was always armed with a supply of 'Spanish juice,' and if he heard any of the children coughing he would instantly take the confection from his pocket and present a goodly piece to the sufferer. It was the custom in those days for overlookers to carry leather straps, which they used freely upon the backs and shoulders of the children under their charge whenever they considered a corrective necessary, which, unfortunately, was very often. Mr. Jacob Bright, however, would never allow such an instrument to be introduced in his works, but in cases of neglect or disobedience the offenders were put out in a corner of the stairs until they showed signs of contrition. None could have been more kind or considerate towards factory children than he, and no surer way of obtaining a holiday could be de-

vised than sending a deputation of children to plead for it. Naturally Mr. Bright interested himself greatly in promoting the education of the children in his employment. A certain portion of the working hours of each day was set apart for educational purposes; and an old man named Joshua Haigh used to attend in the warehouse to instruct the children in reading, writing, and arithmetic, by which means many young people were put in possession of such elements of knowledge as fitted them in after life to advance to higher positions than they would otherwise have been enabled to do. The ladies of Mr. Bright's family also established a sewing-class for the benefit of the girls employed at the mill. Ultimately, however, as the business expanded and the number of factory children increased, a school was built in connection with the mill, and a more formal, though probably not a more effective, system of educational training was adopted. Mrs. Bright was not less mindful than her husband of the comfort and welfare of the children and young women who worked at Greenbank; she used to have an evening class of girls twice a week at one of the cottages near the mill, and did her best to establish in the minds of her scholars a proper knowledge of household matters and a due appreciation of domestic comfort. Nor did Mrs. Bright's good work stop here. In the early years of her married life she not only presided in the best and fullest sense over the affairs of her household, but was a very efficient assistant to her husband in his bookkeeping. This estimable English lady, always alive to the duties and obligations of her position, continued to fulfil the charitable promptings of her deeply sensi-

tive heart, until in the summer of 1830 she died, at the early age of forty-one, and was buried in the Friends' graveyard at Rochdale.

By the year 1823 Mr. Bright had so extended his business operations that he had no fewer than 7000 spindles at work in his factory, a somewhat formidable number for that day. The business that poured in upon Mr. Bright in the third decade of the century, when peace had been re-established and King Cotton ruled supreme over the textile industries of the country, was more than the old mill at Greenbank was able to cope with, so the successful spinner built a large new mill on another part of Cronkeyshaw Common, where in course of time other mills were erected. On the 10th of April 1838, however, a fire broke out in the larger of the new factories, caused by the friction of one of the scutching machines, and the whole building, with its valuable new machinery, was destroyed, damage to the amount of 30,000*l.* being thereby sustained. This large sum was to a considerable extent covered by insurance; nevertheless, the fire was a serious loss to Mr. Bright, and he suffered great inconvenience in his business until the destroyed factory was replaced by another new building. The work of reconstruction occupied about eighteen months, during which time the old mills were kept running night and day, by which means most of the workpeople who might otherwise have been thrown out of employment were kept in work. In 1840 the new mill was in full operation, and business prospered so greatly with the Brights that still another new factory, larger than any of those previously erected, was put up. Other extensions have been made in more recent years, including

the erection of a gigantic shed; and at the present time the firm of Bright Brothers carry on one of the most important establishments in the district, and employ not fewer than 1500 workpeople. A remarkable impetus was given to the business by the introduction of Mr. Bright's sons into the concern as they respectively grew to manhood, and to their spirit, enterprise, and intelligent vigour the rapid extensions referred to were chiefly due. Mr. Jacob Bright, the father, retired from the firm in 1839, since which time the business has been continued under the style of 'John Bright & Brothers.' Little remains to be added concerning the founder of this firm. From the date of his retirement in 1839 Mr. Jacob Bright lived a life of comparative seclusion, watching with quiet interest the growth of the Fieldhouse factories, as the new works were called, and having the years of his old age made doubly happy by the knowledge that the family name acquired lasting lustre from the fame which was steadily gathering round the person of his eldest son. In 1845, when seventy years of age, Mr. Jacob Bright married a third time, taking to wife Miss Mary Metcalfe, who had for many years superintended his household, and whose devotion to his interests thus received its most graceful acknowledgment. Mr. Bright died on the 7th of July 1851, at the age of seventy-six.

It is now necessary that we should speak of the career of Mr. John Bright, and endeavour to show how the lines of his business life intermingled with the lines of that political existence which has now come to be part of the nation's history.

John Bright's early years were passed amidst scenes of great political agitation. On every hand

the outlook was dark and cheerless; the entire horizon of social and political life presented a troubled aspect; the masses, ground down by poverty, and rendered still more unhappy by being shut out from parliamentary representation, were for ever getting up petitions, holding multitudinous demonstrations, and clamouring wildly for reforms of various kinds. During John Bright's boyhood the country, indeed, was kept in a continual ferment; and nowhere was the excitement greater than in Lancashire, where Samuel Bamford, Orator Hunt, the Manchester 'Blanketeers,' and their legions of followers kept up the agitation for many years, and, despite many excesses and mistakes, succeeded eventually in convincing those in high places of the general justice of their demands. All these scenes of turbulence and excitement made a deep impression upon the youthful John Bright; and when the agitators came to Rochdale, and held great meetings on Cronkeyshaw Common—as they not unfrequently did—the sturdy bright-eyed Quaker lad would occasionally mingle with the crowd, and listen eagerly to the fiery speeches in which the leaders of the movement denounced their oppressors and laid bare their poverty and their sufferings. Though but eight years old when the 'Peterloo Massacre' took place, the event made a deep impression upon the boy's mind; and as this was succeeded by fresh developments of popular agitation, and as day by day he came to hear these things discussed in his own family circle, his sympathies were gradually awakened, and all his heart was given up to the advancement of the people's cause. Even in his business experiences he was forced into contact with the politi-

cal questions of the day; the working classes of Rochdale were reduced to the most wretched condition, and the Brights, in their endeavours to find employment for the poor operatives, or in administering relief, had many political truths thrust upon them—truths which those outside the struggle could not fully understand or appreciate, but which were by no means lost upon the young man, who, in the time to come, was to assume the position of one of the people's chief leaders. John Bright divided his time in those days pretty evenly between business and study; his business, no less than his studies, assisting in the formation of that breadth of mind, and the cultivation of that native eloquence, which, in later years, have so greatly distinguished him. Even those who do not hold with his views of political matters will not deny him the possession of these high qualities. The study of politics, indeed, was instinctive with him; and his leanings towards oratory were displayed almost as soon as he had attained to manhood. It was his custom to read the newspaper to the family circle of an evening; and at other times, when not engaged in business, he would be occupied in some work which tended either to his own mental improvement or the advancement of the people generally. His educational training had not been of an ambitious kind. One of his first schools was a local establishment superintended by Mr. William Littlewood at Townhead; thence he was removed to the Friends' School at Ackworth, and subsequently was sent to a school of a similar class at York. He continued at York until fifteen years of age, when, his health giving way somewhat, his father placed him under a tutor at New-

ton-in-Bolland, where the pure Yorkshire air and a comparative freedom from scholastic restraint speedily restored him to health, and he then returned to Rochdale and took his place by his father's side in the factory, making himself acquainted with all the details of cotton-spinning, and applying himself thereto with the earnestness of one who looked only to commercial activity and enterprise as his future sphere of labour. So matters went on until Mr. Bright was attracted, first by one popular movement, and then by another, to mount the platform and take part with those reformers with whom he afterwards threw in his lot with so much power and effect.

The temperance movement attracted Mr. Bright's attention and sympathy as early as 1830; and it was on behalf of this cause that, with the modesty and trepidation of an unfledged orator, he made his first attempt at speaking in public. For a year or two Mr. Bright employed himself very earnestly in advocating teetotal views; but in course of time his mind became absorbed in the more exciting political questions of the period, and he allied himself with that body of reformers with which his name will always remain associated. In 1833 Mr. Bright and a number of friends instituted the Rochdale Literary and Philosophical Society, and Mr. Bright presided at their first meeting. This society formed itself into a sort of debating club; and it is recorded that Mr. Bright brought forward many subjects for discussion, and devoted much energy to the elaboration of his views on those occasions, introducing such subjects for debate as the following: 'From our study of history, ancient and modern, what form of government appears the best suited to promote the happiness of mankind?' 'The

policy or impolicy of laws for the restriction of the importation of corn,' &c. That John Bright would be the prime moving spirit in a society like this goes without saying; and during the eight or ten years that he gave himself up to its debates and meetings he was steadily improving himself in that oratorical art in which he was destined in after years to attain so high a degree of proficiency.

In 1837 or 1838 Mr. Bright made the acquaintance of Richard Cobden. Cobden had by this time earned for himself a name and a position in Manchester, and was well-known for the earnestness and ability with which he advocated the causes of popular education and the repeal of the Corn Laws. It was proposed to establish a 'British School' in Rochdale, and Mr. Bright one day, while visiting Manchester market, called upon Mr. Cobden and asked him to come to Rochdale to address a public meeting there in support of the new school movement. Cobden consented, and at the meeting in question both he and Bright delivered speeches. It is said that Cobden was much struck with Mr. Bright's impressive style of speaking, and from that time until Cobden's death the closest friendship existed between the two. Cobden stayed at Mr. Jacob Bright's house, and before leaving strongly urged Mr. John Bright to join the Anti-Corn-Law movement. It thus came about that on the formation of the Anti-Corn-Law League in 1838 the names of Richard Cobden and John Bright appeared together on the list of the provisional committee, and Mr. Bright and his father contributed handsomely to the League's funds. A sum of 11,000*l.* was raised in a few weeks, and the operations of the League rapidly

spread through all parts of the country, speakers of ability and eminence being engaged to address meetings and promote the scheme in every possible way. On the 2d February 1839 Mr. Bright addressed an open-air meeting on the subject in his native town; and in the same year he and Cobden attended a large Anti-Corn-Law meeting at Bolton, this being the first time that the two popular leaders met on the platform together on this question. It was not until 1841, however, that Mr. Bright threw himself wholly and entirely into the struggle. The cares of business and the attachments of home-life were up to that time first and foremost in his mind; in 1839 he had erected the modest but comfortable residence to which he gave the name of 'One Ash,' and, with his newly-married wife, Elizabeth Priestman, had taken up his abode there. This amiable lady died in 1841, at the age of twenty-six; and it was while the young husband was in the depth of his bereavement that his friend Cobden came to him and summoned him to take part in the great fight which they afterwards carried on, striving side by side until their efforts were at last crowned with victory. Mr. Bright, on the occasion of the unveiling of the Cobden statue at Bradford in 1877, made touching allusion to this circumstance. 'At that time,' he said, 'I was at Leamington, and on the day when Mr. Cobden called upon me—for he happened to be there at the time on a visit to some relatives—I was in the depth of grief, I might almost say of despair, for the light and sunshine of my house had been extinguished. All that was left on earth of my young wife, except the memory of a sainted life and of a too brief happiness, was lying still and cold

in the chamber above us. Mr. Cobden called upon me as his friend, and addressed me, as you might suppose, with words of condolence. After a time he looked up and said, "There are thousands of houses in England at this moment where wives, mothers, and children are dying of hunger. Now," he said, "when the first paroxysm of your grief is past, I would advise you to come with me, and we will never rest until the Corn Law is repealed." Thenceforward he never desisted in his efforts for the attainment of this object; and the power, energy, and eloquence which he brought to bear upon the movement are now matters of history so familiar as to be within the knowledge of every one. When once Mr. Bright had decided that the cause was a just and a righteous one, he never faltered in his endeavours to impress its acceptance upon the country. He soon achieved a considerable reputation as a speaker, and received several invitations to stand as a Free-trade candidate for parliamentary honours. In 1843 he yielded to the solicitations of the Free-traders of Durham, and contested that city in opposition to Lord Dunsannon, but was defeated by a majority of 101. Lord Dunsannon was in the same year, however, unseated for bribery, and Mr. Bright came forward again, being this time opposed by Mr. Purvis, Q.C. Mr. Bright was returned by a majority of 78, and on the 7th of August 1843 he made his maiden speech in the House of Commons, speaking for upwards of half an hour in favour of Mr. Ewart's motion for the extension of the principle of Free-trade. As an instance of the kind of opposition that Mr. Bright had to hold up against, it may be mentioned that during his second electioneering

campaign at Durham one of the Newcastle journals advised its readers as follows: 'It is stated that Mr. Bright, the Anti-Corn-Law agitator, is expected to visit the wool-fair, which will be held at Alnwick shortly, in order to scatter the seeds of disaffection in that quarter. Should he make his appearance, which is not improbable, it is to be hoped there may be found some stalwart yeoman to treat the disaffected vagabond as he deserves.' Threats of this sort, however, were powerless to deter Mr. Bright from pursuing the course he had marked out for himself, and he fared at Alnwick as at many other places—he subdued, if he did not convince, his opponents by the power of his eloquence, and came and went without being molested. For seven years the Anti-Corn-Law agitation was kept up with unabated vigour, and in June 1846 the much-desired reform was sanctioned by the Legislature. In 1847 Mr. Bright was elected unopposed, along with Mr. Milner Gibson, to represent Manchester; and for the next ten years he continued to hold that honourable and responsible position, taking an active part in the parliamentary work of the time, and holding one of the foremost positions in the House of Commons as an orator. The enumeration of Mr. Bright's parliamentary successes is somewhat apart from the purpose of the present article; but it is not too much to say that, considered quite irrespective of political colour, those successes were sufficient to stamp Mr. Bright as one of the most dignified, weighty, conscientious, and impressive speakers that our legislative assembly has known in modern times; while on the platform, as a man of the people speaking to the people, he is unsurpassed in

the art of swaying the feelings and touching the hearts of the multitude.

During all the ten years that Mr. Bright represented Manchester, the business of Bright Brothers prospered materially; their works were considerably extended; and while Mr. John Bright was actively engaged in attending to his parliamentary duties, his brothers, Mr. Thomas Bright and Mr. Jacob Bright, were, with no less assiduity, devoting themselves to the advancement of the commercial interests of the family. In addition to the cotton-spinning business, commenced, and for so many years profitably carried on, by their father, Messrs. Bright Brothers entered largely into another branch of trade—the carpet manufacture. In the course of their experiments and extensions in the last-named department, Messrs. Bright found it necessary to adopt many improvements in machinery and appliances, and in doing this they got entangled in a lawsuit which was a sort of commercial *cause célèbre* in its time. Messrs. Crossley & Sons of Halifax, the well-known carpet manufacturers, contended that their Rochdale competitors had infringed a certain patent granted to Messrs. Crossley for 'improvements in printing yarns for, and in weaving carpets and other fabrics.' An action was commenced by Messrs. Crossley against Messrs. Bright in September 1859, and the litigation was not brought to an end until some time in 1864. The proceedings were in respect of two patents—one granted to Messrs. Crossley, Collier, & Hudson in 1850, and the other granted to Mr. William Wood in the same year, of both which patents Messrs. Crossley had become proprietors. In an early stage of the litigation

Messrs. Crossley found it necessary to disclaim a portion of Wood's patent, and proceedings had to be commenced anew, Wood's patent forming the subject of one action, and Crossley, Collier, & Hudson's patent of another. Both actions stood for trial at the London Guildhall on the 1st July 1862, and were then referred to arbitration, Mr. Lush, Q.C. (now Mr. Justice Lush), being the arbitrator mutually agreed upon by both parties. Mr. Grove, Q.C. (now Mr. Justice Grove), and Mr. Webster were counsel for the plaintiffs, and Mr. Manisty, Q.C. (now Mr. Justice Manisty), and Mr. Hindmarsh were for the defendants. The reference on Wood's patent was taken first. After various sittings, held at the Westminster Palace Hotel, the arbitrator, in January 1863, delivered his award in favour of Messrs. Bright, finding that they had not infringed Wood's patent. The reference on Crossley, Collier, & Hudson's patent began on the 16th May 1863, and was many times adjourned. The witnesses examined in the course of the proceedings included Sir F. Crossley, M.P., Mr. Bright, and many other distinguished persons. The models shown on both sides were extremely numerous; and in the course of the proceedings the plaintiffs sent up to London, and worked by steam-power, a loom containing the improvements in weaving alleged to have been infringed. Messrs. Bright also had two looms set up and worked by steam-power in the neighbourhood of Westminster. After an inquiry extending over twenty-one days, the proceedings before the arbitrator were brought to a close on the 16th of February 1864. The award was delivered on the 8th of the following month, the arbitrator having found that the plain-

tiffs were not the first and true inventors of the improvements in printing yarns, and that the defendants had not infringed that part of the patent which related to improvements in weaving carpets and other fabrics. This was an important victory for Messrs. Bright, and from that time to this they have continued to hold a good position amongst the carpet manufacturers of this country.

There was one question in connection with factory management, however, in which, curious to say, Messrs. Bright opposed themselves to popular feeling, and that was in regard to the ten hours' movement. While the present Lord Shaftesbury, Richard Oastler, and others were agitating for the restriction of the hours of labour in factories, and while philanthropic zeal generally was allying itself with this great crusade, Messrs. Bright actively opposed the movement, conscientiously believing that it was wrong in principle and could result in no good. They judged the question solely from their own standpoint, it would seem. Anxious to a remarkable degree for the welfare of their workpeople, and promoting their interests in every possible way, Messrs. Bright could not see that anything was to be gained by legislative interference; moreover, it was contrary to their ideas of Free-trade that Parliament should step in between employer and employed in the manner proposed. There were those who accused John Bright in that exciting time of acting from motives of self-interest; but with his whole career spread out before us, with all its light and shadow showing in clear outline, we can now see that in this, as in all else, he sincerely thought he was doing that which was most conducive to the people's true interests. Mr. Cobden, Mr.

Joseph Hume, and many other friends of the working classes took the same stand as the Brights upon this question. 'The real object of the promoters of this measure,' said John Bright, 'is not to take care of the children under eighteen and women of all ages, but to interfere by law with the labour of all persons, of whatever age and whatever sex they may be, who are engaged in the manufactures of this country, and to give to these classes that measure of legislative protection—I use the word "protection" in the same sense in which it has been used by all who are in favour of monopolies—a protection that will diminish the hours of labour while it will continue a rate of wages which, from the days of Sadler till the present time, is clearly a rate higher than labour in a free market can command.' He believed that a diminution in the hours of labour could and would be made without the interference of Parliament. It is worthy of remark, however, that, while holding these unpopular opinions, the Brights made no objection to their workpeople and manager forwarding to the House of Commons a petition in favour of the Ten Hours' Bill. Mr. John Bright's opposition to this movement was much resented by the working classes on the occasion of his nomination for Manchester in July 1847, and for a time he was unable to obtain a hearing from the hustings. 'There are points of difference,' he said, 'serious points of difference, between me and some of those to whom I now speak; but the opinions I hold I hold honestly and maintain fearlessly, and I do not think the worse of any man because he holds different opinions from mine. . . . Although there are those here of the operative class who consider

me as their enemy, I can tell them that I would much rather have their ill-will now because I advocated their interests than their ill-will hereafter because I had betrayed them. I am blamed because I did not give my assent to a measure which was popular with a portion of the operatives; I am blamed because I opposed the Ten Hours' Bill—because I did not consent that Parliament should close the manufactories of this country for two hours more a day. Well, I may be wrong; but if I am wrong I am wrong in ignorance, and not in intention. I boldly stated my opinion; I have argued for it, spoken for it, voted for it, and am ready to maintain it; but henceforth we shall have an opportunity of seeing which is right—the advocates of the measure or its opponents. If it be successful, I shall rejoice; if it be not, I shall be willing to help in its amendment.' Such honesty of utterance as this could not fail to make itself felt through the covering of prejudice which had spread itself round the hearts of the operatives; but, although Mr. Bright would to-day probably admit that the Ten Hours' Bill really proved a great boon to the country, and that he himself made a mistake in judgment in regard to it, he has since that time, by the sincerity and high purpose of his life, amply vindicated his claim to be the true friend of the people.

Mr. Bright's attitude, on the occasion of the breaking out of the Crimean war, cost him his seat for Manchester in 1857; but Birmingham shortly afterwards paid him the compliment of electing him, and he has continued to represent the metropolis of the Midlands from that time to the present. Amongst his more powerful oratorical achievements may be men-

tioned his masterly speech in opposition to Mr. Roebuck's motion, in June 1863, for the recognition of the Southern Confederacy of the United States; his speeches on the Reform movement, when Mr. Gladstone's efforts in that direction were defeated by the action of the 'Adullamites,' were also memorable examples of vigorous and impressive eloquence. On the formation of Mr. Gladstone's former Administration, Mr. Bright was offered the post of Secretary of State for India; but the condition of his health was not sufficiently good to justify him in undertaking the duties of so arduous an office, and he afterwards, with some reluctance, accepted the appointment of President of the Board of Trade, which he held for two years—from December 1868 to December 1870. His health was at this time in a very precarious state, and for the next three years his presence in the House of Commons was almost unknown, the right honourable gentleman during that time living in almost complete retirement. When, in the autumn of 1873, Mr. Bright found himself restored to health, he appeared before his constituents in Bingley Hall, Birmingham, when 15,000 persons assembled to welcome him back to public life. He now consented to take office again in Mr. Gladstone's reconstructed Cabinet, and succeeded Mr. Childers as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, which post he retained until the dissolution and defeat of the Liberal Government in 1874. From 1874 to the present time Mr. Bright has been a stately and dignified figure in our political life; for, though his public appearances have been less numerous than formerly, the occasions when he has allowed his voice to be heard mark distinct stages of

recent political movement. Now that the Liberals are once more in power Mr. Bright has been induced to resume the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster.

It would be easy to set forth the many prominent public appearances which Mr. Bright has made since then both in Parliament and out of it; to point out what important public measures he has either originated or strikingly supported; to mention the great occasions on which he has addressed large multitudes of his fellow-countrymen at public meetings at Birmingham and elsewhere; to allude to some of his wonderfully felicitous phrases or expressions; or to enlarge upon the beauty and manliness of his oratory generally. But these are things already written deeply upon the hearts of the people, and indelibly inscribed in the pages of our parliamentary history. All that need be said further with regard to him in connection with the object of this article is, that in June 1847 he married, for his second wife, Margaret Elizabeth Leatham, daughter of Mr. Leatham, the Wakefield banker, and sister of Mr. E. A. Leatham, M.P.

Concerning Mr. John Bright's brothers—Mr. Thomas Bright and Mr. Jacob Bright—it will be necessary to add a few words. The former has devoted himself during the greater portion of his life to the management of the business concerns of Bright Brothers; and his extensive knowledge of commercial affairs, his energy, and his enterprise have largely assisted in the development of the manufactures carried on at the Fieldhouse factories. Mr. Jacob Bright has to some extent emulated his elder brother and taken to public life, being now one of the representatives of Manchester.

The Fieldhouse factories are not to be reckoned amongst the 'show' manufacturing establishments of the cotton districts; they are plain substantial buildings, well adapted for the purposes to which they have been devoted, but are wholly devoid of architectural pretensions. They have, by excellent management, been the means not only of making for the Brights their fortunes, but have provided profitable employment for a large community of workers, between whom and their masters there has existed a feeling of attachment which in times of emergency or trial has often resulted in great good. When the Plug Rioters descended upon Rochdale during their memorable raid of 1842, the workpeople were ordered out of the Cronkeyshaw mill, and the machinery was stopped. The mob collected round old Mr. Jacob Bright's house, and gave way to the wildest demonstrations, singing songs, and rending the air with their shouts. Mr. Bright sent for three 'skips' full of bread, and with his own hands distributed it amongst the clamorous rioters. Money was also given to them, and after holding one or two noisy meetings the mob went off in the direction of Bacup. The next day the mills were again set to work, but they had hardly begun when the news came that the rioters were returning. The rioters came, and for a time a dangerous disturbance seemed imminent. The military and the police were called out, the Riot Act was read, and the town was in the utmost disorder and ferment. At this juncture Mr. John Bright came forward and addressed a large concourse of rioters and others assembled near Greenbank mill, urging them to refrain from violence, and announcing that his father and he were ready to open

their factory any day when the workpeople were ready to return, but that they could not in the then unfortunate condition of trade concede an advance of wages. Mr. Bright followed this up a day or two afterwards with a sort of manifesto to the working men of Rochdale, in which he said, 'You are suffering, you have long suffered, your wages for many years declined, and your position has gradually and steadily become worse. Your sufferings have naturally produced discontent, and you have turned eagerly to almost any scheme which gave hope of relief. . . An advance of wages to the rate paid in 1840 and ten hours' labour per day were the demands you were urged to make. But when the turning out in this district was completed, and you had become excited, these demands were abandoned, and you were urged to refuse to work until the Charter became the law. Many of you know full well that neither Act of Parliament nor act of multitude can keep up wages. You know that trade has long been bad, and that with a bad trade wages cannot rise.' The advice of Mr. Bright on this occasion appears to have been more effective than the repressive measures adopted by the local authorities; for in a day or two work was resumed both at Mr. Bright's and at the other factories in Rochdale, and the difficulty was tided over.

As years went on and trade improved, both workpeople and masters prospered in a degree that far exceeded all anticipation; and so things progressed until the time of the American civil war, when the whole of the cotton districts were plunged into the most deplorable distress. The story of the sufferings of the Lancashire people during the Cotton Famine constitutes one of the gloomiest

chapters in modern history ; and the patient endurance of the sufferers, and the readiness with which the entire nation responded to the appeals for help that were made on their behalf, will never be forgotten. The true 'grit' of the English character has seldom been more thoroughly manifested than was the case in this time of tribulation and want, and only those who lived amongst the grief-stricken toilers could realise the extent to which the poor were made to suffer. Many factories were stopped altogether, and the remainder were compelled to adopt short time. Rochdale, although partly engaged in the woollen and carpet trades, felt the depressing effects of the stoppage of the cotton supplies almost as keenly as those towns which were entirely employed in the cotton manufacture. A distress committee was formed in Rochdale, under whose superintendence soup-kitchens were opened, and other modes of administering relief adopted. The Brights were amongst the first to take part in this good work ; Mr. John Bright took steps along with the Mayor, Mr. G. L. Ashworth, to carry out a general project of charitable assistance ; and in connection with their own workpeople, Messrs. Bright organised special systems of relief. The Fieldhouse factories had to run short time ; but in order to provide their workpeople with the means of holding on until the distress had passed away, they augmented their necessarily scanty wages by loans of sums of money to be repaid by instalments in more prosperous times. At the same time their cottage tenants were allowed to live rent-free, and everything that the firm could do to ameliorate the condition of the people who were dependent upon

them was cheerfully done. Messrs. Bright also showed consideration for their workpeople in another way ; they set apart one of the large rooms in their mill as a school-room for adults, and provided them with instruction in the elementary branches of education ; and likewise supplied them with books, newspapers, and periodicals, thus affording them the best possible means of using the time of their enforced idleness.

But in spite of all that Messrs. Bright have done to promote the welfare of their workpeople year after year, there have been times when political rancour has engendered statements intended to give the idea that the Brights did not put into practice in their own business concerns those high principles of conduct which they so persistently contended for in imperial matters. In 1867 these slanders were circulated so freely that Messrs. Bright's workpeople were prompted to come forward themselves to repudiate the assertions which had been made, and which were intended mainly to injure Mr. John Bright. The *employés* of Messrs. Bright, therefore, on the 25th January 1867, presented Mr. Bright with an address in the Public Hall, Rochdale, in which they desired to express their entire sympathy with, and their sincere respect for, him under the malignant slanders which had been urged against him as their employer. 'We feel impelled by a sense of duty,' the address went on to say, 'to take this opportunity of declaring to you that all the reports which have been circulated against you throughout the country are entirely false. They have been made and written by parties who, to make political capital, have attacked in an unscrupulous and base manner your private character. We are well

aware that the consciousness of those attacks being untrue will be sufficient to uphold you in the dignity to which you have attained. Your conduct as our employer has been such as to meet with our entire approval. You have always endeavoured to improve our moral, social, and intellectual well-being, &c. A more complete reply to slanderous charges could not have been made.

Mr. Thomas Bright and Mr. Jacob Bright, brothers and partners of Mr. John Bright, are more familiar figures in Rochdale and Manchester than their elder brother. They all received the same educational and business training, and as they grew to manhood were made members of the firm originated by their father. Mr. Thomas Bright is a magistrate for the county of Lancaster; but he has had no ambition beyond his business, and in that he has displayed great energy, foresight, and aptitude.

Mr. Jacob Bright evinced a lively interest in public affairs from a very early age, and his townsmen showed their appreciation of his great services to the social and intellectual improvement of the people by electing him their first mayor in 1856. In advocating political reforms he has often been in advance of his time; but, like his elder brother, he has always had the courage of his opinions, and has given free utterance to them, whether popular or not. He took the same stand as his brother in regard to the ten hours' movement, and on the question of the Crimean war. Four times have the electors of Manchester chosen him for one of their representatives,—in 1867, 1868, 1876, and 1880. In 1876 his opponents attacked him with the same weapon that ten years before had been used

against Mr. John Bright. Mr. Jacob Bright was slandered as an employer of labour, and was told that where he was best known—in Rochdale—he would not dare to come forward. A crowded meeting of Messrs. Bright's workpeople was immediately held to protest against such unfounded statements, and a memorial, signed by 553 adult workpeople, was presented to Mr. Jacob Bright, testifying that the imputations were 'base and groundless calumnies,' that the firm of which Mr. Bright was a member had been in existence for about eighty years, and that during that time there had been only one strike, and that merely of a partial character. Mr. Jacob Bright has not signalised himself in Parliament like his brother; still he has taken up a fairly prominent position, and has identified himself closely with several important measures. The woman's suffrage movement is one of his pet projects, and the ladies of England owe him a debt of gratitude for the gallant manner in which he has pleaded their cause both in and out of Parliament.

The business affairs of Messrs. Bright have grown with the times. As England's commercial prosperity has increased, the Fieldhouse factories have been extended; and with the accession of the grandsons of Mr. Jacob Bright senior to the firm, new energies and new developments have been given to the original undertaking. Messrs. Bright have participated substantially in the good things which have resulted from Lancashire's long supremacy in the cotton industries; and as the cotton consumption has fallen off they have not been slow to adapt themselves to other branches of manufacture. Whether in the future we shall see the cotton, woollen, worsted,

or carpet industries fully restored to the same high conditions of prosperity as they held in the past is more than can at present be predicted ; but howsoever we may fare in the time to come, we shall not fail to give praise to the men who, like Messrs. Bright, have, while engaged in carrying on a large commercial establishment for their own profit and advantage, at the same time made it one of the chief aims of their lives to advance in every legitimate way the interests not only of their own workpeople, but of the working classes generally. Justice and virtue are the principles which have guided the Brights in all their business relations ; and these are the principles which they have always endeavoured to instil into the minds of those with whom they have been brought into contact. It would be difficult to recall any nobler views of life and duty than those set forth by Mr. John Bright in the course of a speech that he delivered in Birmingham in 1870. 'It is a fact,' he said, 'that no government, that no administration, that no laws, and that no amount of industry or commerce, that no extent of freedom, can give prosperity and solid comfort in the homes of the people, unless there be in those homes economy, temperance, and the practice of virtue. This is needful for all ; but it is especially needful, most needful in some respects, for those whose possessions are the least abundant and the least secured. If we could

subtract from the ignorance, the poverty, the suffering, the sickness, and the crime which are now witnessed amongst us, the ignorance, the poverty, the suffering, the sickness, and the crime which are caused by one single, but the most prevalent, habit or vice of drinking needlessly, which destroys the body and mind and home and family, do we not all feel that this country would be so changed, and so changed for the better, that it would almost be impossible for us to know it again ? Let me, then, in conclusion say what is upon my heart to say, what I know to be true, what I have felt every hour of my life when I have been discussing great questions affecting the condition of the working classes,—let me say this to all the people : that it is by a combination of a wise government and a virtuous people, and not otherwise, that we may hope to make some steps towards that blessed time when there shall be no longer complaining in our streets, and when our garners shall be full, affording all manner of store.' The man who can give expression to such thoughts as these, and can live up to them, no matter what his position in life may be, is sure of being held in grateful remembrance ; and that this will be the case as far as regards Mr. John Bright and those other members of his firm and family who have evinced the same integrity of conduct and high purpose, few will be disposed to deny.

THE VIOLIN-PLAYER.

BY BERTHA THOMAS, AUTHOR OF 'PROUD MAISIE.'

CHAPTER XIX.

IN THE WOLKONSKI GARDENS.

HE who knows Rome knows the Wolkonski Gardens, a resort for students and dreamers, more appropriately called Wolkonski Wilderness. Picturesque neglect, luxuriant vegetation, and solitude give them a charm most welcome to eyes fatigued by the geometrical lines, straight walks, and trim box-borders of rival Roman pleasure-grounds. They lie on the skirts of the city, touching the borders of the desolate campagna. The line of old town-walls runs between. The outlook is upon the ruins of an amphitheatre, the Santa Croce Basilica, and the Alban and Sabine Hills. The garden itself is just a lovely wreck—wild-violets and anemones spring up in the rank grass; heavy ruined walls and arches of ancient baths and aqueducts totter under loads of ivy; nature does her will, and art has no hand in the arrangements. The spot was close to the Villa Marta, and Val's favourite haunt.

Lady Brereton had passed six months in Rome without visiting it. The grounds can only be entered on foot, and are not a fashionable lounge. She was there this afternoon, but for the sake of some English friends—to wit, Gervase's mother and sister.

They were making a short stay in Rome, *en route* from Naples to the Riviera. Amy, worn out by the fatigue of 'doing' Rome in

a week, breathed freely to-day because they were leaving to-morrow. Mrs. Damian, always restless, had had a severe fit of sight-seeing; though caring nothing for the sights intrinsically: it was an excuse for keeping Gervase to themselves from morning till night. For the last week his time had been entirely occupied in taking them about. This afternoon he had official engagements, and they went out driving with Diana instead. It was a Villa Wolkonski day, and very fine; Gervase had promised, if free, to join them in the gardens at five o'clock.

Leaving the carriage at the gates, the ladies went sauntering about, wondering a little, as their eyes rested on weedy walks, decrepit brick arches, and a desolate view, what they had come out into this wilderness to see. Mrs. Damian, who had travelled a good deal, considered herself absolved, for the rest of the term of her natural life, from the necessity of admiring anything; and the beauties now before them were too obvious and simple for Diana to perceive. Amy, only, was enjoying herself, in a girlish irrational manner, and felt that the sunset was delicious, and the crimson and purple anemone flowers, and the spring tints. Why did it turn her thoughts to England and their Hampshire home, whither they were returning next summer, and to Charlie, the son of one of their county

neighbours, to whom she was engaged, and to be married next spring! She scarcely heard the running dialogue between her mother and cousin, which resembled a troubled sea fretting against a rock. Mrs. Damian cherished a chronic grudge against Diana Brereton, *née* Francombe, for refusing Gervase, or failing to captivate him into a marriage. No matter with whom the chief responsibility lay, the thing had *not* come off; her son had still a dangerous freedom, and, what was worse, a dangerously increasing clinging to it. Had he not but yesterday put her off with heartless levity when she threw out hints about a certain young widow she had picked up, and persuaded to come and be her neighbour on the Riviera—moderately pretty, immoderately rich, and, it was whispered, not inconsolable! Would he not join them at Genoa, and see for himself? He had laughingly professed himself so well satisfied with her description as not to care to pry further.

Diana smiled to herself as Mrs. Damian related her woes. Gervase's latest *entraînement* had not escaped his cousin's penetration. An indiscreet hint or two dropped by Madame Araciél had put her on the scent, and she took note of it, as of something of minor consequence and no concern of hers at all. That Gervase should lay siege to the heart of the girl all Rome had gone mad about was just what might have been expected. For the rest, either Laurence was rigid in principle, in which case it must come to a break between them soon, or she was not, in which case the only result that regarded Lady Brereton, would be that Mdlle. Ther-val's social dignity would suffer, and her personal acquaintance no longer be sought after, as at pre-

sent, by ladies in the better circles. Against Gervase in love, thought Diana privately, what girl in such a position had the ghost of a chance?

She listened patiently, as Mrs. Damian harped away on the old subject and wound up with the old cadence.

'It would be ruination to all his prospects for him to marry a girl without fortune, and he is too proud, when the point comes, to make up to an heiress. Between these difficulties, Di, I sometimes despair. And to think that his uncle—from whom he might reasonably have expected better things—should have left him nothing but so much waste-paper!'

This was the crowning grievance—that Mr. Otho Damian, dying unexpectedly two years ago, should have bequeathed nothing to his nephew but the result of his latest unsuccessful speculation, a mining concern in South America, in which he had sunk a great deal of money, but in which Gervase, fortunately perhaps, had none to sink.

'If, as poor Otho believed, the government would take the working of the scheme, property there would go up to a premium, and Gervase be enabled to assume his proper position without having to owe anything to anybody.'

'If!' said Diana provokingly. 'I think the rich wife is still the better hope of the two.'

At this moment, emerging from one of the shrubberies, they came in sight of a little group seated round a stone basin of water on a grass-plot: a lady middle-aged, but well favoured still, and beside her a tall slim creature, with a face to stand out among a thousand. A young man with his hat off was seated on the rock-work at their feet, and two children pressing closely round him completed the picture.

'What a pretty little thing!' cried Amy, her admiration caught by Cherubina's silken hair.

'Nay, but look at the girl on the bench,' said Mrs. Damian. 'She is a beauty, if you like; the very image of the Raphael in the Sciarra Palace. But I know the face quite well. She was at Mrs. Franklin's last night. Let me see: is it the young Countess Wielickska, or Mrs. Pontifex's daughter?'

'Laurence Therval, the violin-player,' said Diana, laughing.

'To be sure. How stupid of me! Who is the gentleman with them? I think he was at Mrs. Franklin's too; and what in the world are they all about?'

Val, whose fingers were never still, was diligently employed in making paper boats and launching them in the pool for the amusement of Domenico and Cherubina.

'Mr. Romer, the sculptor,' said Diana unconcernedly.

'My darling Di, you know everything and everybody,' said Mrs. Damian effusively. 'I have heard so much of Mr. Romer, and never been to see his studio, though I know he is a *protégé* of Adolphus's. Is it true he is to marry Mdlle. Therval?'

'Mdlle. Therval!' Diana was taken by surprise, and showed it. Mrs. Damian was looking rather malicious as Lady Brereton replied stiffly, 'I am not in that young lady's confidence.'

'He seemed decidedly smitten,' continued the elder lady, who was nothing if not spiteful. 'Every one was talking about it last night. They say she is the original of some famous statue of his—quite an old attachment. Well, the girl is seriously beautiful, just the style to captivate an artist. It seems a pity to disturb such a happy family-party; but I

do feel a curiosity to intrude. Then you can introduce me to Mr. Romer, and I can make my apologies to him for having omitted to visit his studio.'

'Stay, mamma,' objected Amy, detaining them a moment. 'I do believe she is going to play.'

The party before them had just come from a rehearsal at the Villa Marta, where Val gives a grand musical *soirée* to-morrow. Laurence's violin was with them; the box lay there temptingly on the bench. The gardens to all appearances were deserted, and Val was urgently petitioning for a song, a song without words.

'See,' he said, pointing westwards; 'there's the sun drooping to sleep as quick as he can; just one lullaby before he drops off.'

As he made the request he was regarding Laurence with an earnestness that corroborated Mrs. Damian's random assertions, as even Diana must own. Disregarding Amy's entreaty, she advanced, and Domenico, catching sight of strangers, gave the alarm. Val, on recognising Lady Brereton, snatched his hat and rose to his feet brusquely, shipwrecking a remarkably fine vessel, to the sorrow of the juveniles.

Diana had the art of graceful introductions when she chose. Mrs. Damian barely bowed to the ladies of the party, but fastened upon Val, overwhelming him with such hyperbolical expressions of regret at not having made his acquaintance till on the eve of departure, that he might have been excused for believing she had come to Rome expressly to see his studio.

'Now I think of it,' said Diana suavely, 'we pass the Villa Marta in driving home. By Mr. Romer's leave, we might call in there on our way. Brutus will do the honours of the studio

in your absence,' she said, looking at Val and smiling; 'he is an admirable steward.'

'Nay,' he replied courteously, 'I could not think of allowing that. You will permit me to do myself the pleasure of accompanying you. My friends here, I know, will excuse me.'

In a word, Diana had triumphed; Val was walked off, a flattered, dazed, and not unwilling captive; and soon the others heard the heavy gates swing to, and the wheels of Lady Brereton's carriage receding in the distance.

'Mrs. Damian seems a charming woman,' began Madame Araciël; 'quite an enthusiast on the subject of sculpture. Cherubina, you little savage, what are you about?'

She had let her hat drop into the pool, and was swinging it round on the water by the ribbons impatiently.

'Mr. Romer leaves us for the fine ladies,' she said; 'I don't like him any more;' and, deaf to Domenico's remonstrances, she fell to making havoc of Val's handiwork, the fleet.

Their pleasure-party was broken up. Cherubina had turned fractious, Domenico cried and fought alternately, and the mother rated them both to no purpose, till Laurence, suddenly taking up her violin, imposed silence, like a new Orpheus.

The soft notes stole on the evening air, mingling curiously with the sighing breeze, the twitter of the birds, the hum of the bees. The garden seemed forsaken now. Yet that music had drawn an unseen, unsuspected, human listener towards the spot. Gervase, arriving punctually at the rendezvous at the villa, and looking in vain for his own party, had suddenly forgotten all about them on catching sounds that sent him exploring in another direction.

Screened by the trees, he waited to approach till the strain had ceased. Laurence turned round, saw him there, and started. Had she, then, a magic power of invocation in her violin to summon whom she would?

There was a more natural way of accounting for his appearance at this moment, and Madame hastened to explain to him the absence of the friends he came to seek.

'They have been here, but left a quarter of an hour ago—Mrs. and Miss Damian and Lady Brereton. Mr. Romer has gone to show them over his studio. They are not coming back.'

Gervase's face brightened. What a chance! Just his luck; the best of all good luck! It was a week since he had seen Laurence except in public; the week had seemed interminable, and his life to have stagnated. Till to-day he had always thought the Wolkonski Gardens a dull sort of place—a shabby little villa, with a pleasure-ground all ruins and dead leaves, where you were startled by coming upon a lot of family gravestones somewhere in a damp back-garden:—the very last spot on earth in which to enjoy oneself. He would not have changed places with an occupant of the Hesperides now, as he took the seat on the rock-work just vacated by Mr. Romer.

Cherubina and Domenico ran races on the terraces, then went off to hunt for flowers in the long grass. Laurence played snatches of music—wild Spanish songs and dances; Madame murmured delight; and Gervase was silent, all but his eyes. He made all sorts of excuses to himself for letting them utter the feeling that was insensibly mastering him.

'Come,' sighed Madame at last, rising reluctantly, 'we must be

going ; the dew is falling, the sun is setting, time is flying.'

'The bells are tolling, birds are singing, crickets chirping,' said Gervase, laughing ; 'but why does it follow we must go ?'

'It is the place to catch fever,' said Madame seriously. 'Mr. Romer said we were not to remain after sundown. Wait, Renza, whilst I fetch the children.'

She left them to search for the truants. Gervase laid his fingers on Laurence's violin, taking it out of her hands for a moment and looking at it perplexedly, as you might at an amulet or a moonstone. Well, was there not a strange and inordinate power centred in that little old Cremona toy ? The miracles of electricity go no further.

'Ought we to love or hate it ?' said he, with a sudden look from the violin to the player. 'Sometimes I hardly know.'

'What do you see there, then,' she asked, 'except music ?'

'I see the power that presides over you—the key to your past and your future, the love of your life.'

'The love of my life !' she repeated musingly, looking far away to the distant purple hills and the desolate basilica, and the ruins rising here and there, and the long line of aqueducts stretching across the waving green plain.

'Is it true ?' he pursued. 'You know they say you will forego all else in the world for that.'

'I have said I will keep to what I have followed since I was a child ; that I will not forsake what I have lived for all these years. Can I do more ?'

Cage her heart and clip its wings, she could not ; why, then, should she try ?

'No, no, no more,' he said, speaking low, but with a passionate tenderness that thrilled her. 'Lau-

rence—ah, why will you turn your head away ? What have I done ? what harm ? *Wenn ich dich liebe, was geht's dich an ?*

She turned to him with a smile—the very sweetest smile he had ever seen on a woman's face, which was saying much—tried to speak, drooped her head silently, as if owning that the only words that would come were not those that she meant, ought perhaps to speak.

It was only the beginning of love between these two, yet it seemed to both as if it had reached a height there was no surpassing.

Madame Araciel's voice was heard calling at the other end of the gravel walk. She was urging them to come—it was closing time at the Villa Wolkonaki.

Gervase went on his way comparing himself to Saul, the son of Kish, who set off to seek his father's asses, and found a kingdom instead. He did not pursue the parallel further. There was no room in his mind just then for anything but exaltation.

That his present conduct was selfish, inexcusable, was a view others might take, not he. It was easy to prove it otherwise to himself by all manner of sophistry. He liked to think the circumstances perfectly unique. Had not Laurence foresworn the idea of marriage for herself—its cares and duties and preoccupations—so as to have the more to give to her art ? Would not such a union be as fatal to her professionally as to himself socially ? None the less was his own heart set on the conquest of hers, and just now he felt as though the moment of victory were not very far off.

CHAPTER XX.

FESTA.

BRUTUS has got on his best clothes, best face, and his very best temper. The Villa Marta is to be gay to-night. Since Val came to dwell under that roof there has been no such *festa* within his gates; little, indeed, in a social way, beyond an occasional afternoon gathering of friends and enemies to view some statue about to leave the studio for its long home in England, America, or the Italian villa of some grandee. Val believed the cares of hospitality to be incompatible with the stern exigencies of work; and no wonder, seeing he was almost as particular about the arrangement of his parties as with the details of his statues. If Brutus tried his master's patience on working days, the latter had his revenge on holidays, such as the present.

Studio and garden are lit up with soft-coloured and fantastically-shaped silk lanterns. The temple has been converted into a concert-room, one fit for Apollo and the Muses; the statues admirably grouped amid the greenery; the seats arranged irregularly, and not without regard to picturesque effect.

'What for should I stuff my room like a beehive?' was the retort wherewith Val dismissed Brutus's suggestion—that by placing chairs in rows more guests might be accommodated.

The partition curtains have been removed; a raised platform for the musicians fills the upper division of the room. In the apse beyond, against a dark-red background, rises the marble figure of the Glee Maiden. Val has taken it into his head to exhibit to-night, for the first time in Rome, the statue that made his reputation.

There was a ferment going on too at the Piazza San Matteo. Madame Araciel had a new dress. Such birthdays are days of travail in her life. Only when the last blemishes had been removed, the last touches supplied, did the good woman become herself again. Then she turned to Laurence, the grand object of her solicitude next to the gown. What has the girl been thinking of to array herself so simply this evening? A long white robe, like statuesque drapery—graceful enough—its folds fell perfectly—but still—Madame looked dubious. It displeased her that the great ladies should outshine Renza in their silk attire and flounces and embroideries. But remonstrance quickly melted away in approval.

'Kiss me, child. Why, you are looking lovely!' she exclaimed, with effusion. 'Ah, I know of some one who, if his heart isn't broken to-night—'

Laurence laid her hand on the *madre's* lips to check her. The girl turned away: the colour had left her cheek for the moment. Madame ran off into the bedroom to give Cherubina some parting admonitions as to not setting the house on fire in their absence.

Laurence caught up a letter Madame had left lying on the table, and that they had already read through. It was from Araciel, in his usual flighty scrappy style. He was at Milan, and not very well. He had hurt his hand slightly, he wrote, and was in dread that it might prevent his playing at a concert coming off three days hence. There followed a half-incoherent suggestion or petition. Would Laurence be inclined to make the journey and come to be his substitute if necessary?

Madame had not taken the communication in earnest. Absorbed

in the present and the visible, she treated it as a passing wild whim. Her husband was always fidgety. By to-morrow he would be well, and have forgotten he had ever hinted at such a request. Only Laurence, reading between the lines, fancied she saw symptoms of nervous apprehensions that at another time would have caused her to start for Milan immediately. But her head was not clear to-night. She had to force the sense of the letter upon her. Was her selfish insensate happiness making her indifferent to those nearest to her, their weal and woe?

Val stood in the portico of his temple to receive the assembling congregation, smiling, bowing, and playing the polite host in an unexceptionable manner, to the extreme entertainment of some art-students present, who, knowing him familiarly, and therefore chiefly in the rough, were infinitely tickled by the little ebullitions of vehemence and impatience that would every now and then break through his company manners.

The company, for their part, had rendered due honour to the sculptor and his *soirées*. There seemed a tacit agreement among the ladies that this was no occasion for second-best toilettes, and almost everybody had come in time. It was now eight o'clock. Only Lady Brereton's party tarried yet. 'She means to tantalise us, keep us waiting, perhaps fail at the last,' thought Val savagely. 'She is a coquette, a—Ah, her carriage!' as it tardily drew up at the gates.

Brutus (whom certain Americans present persist in taking for one of the company, and addressing as 'sir') solemnly ushers the English lady and friends along the gravel walk to the temple. Gervase is among them, but Sir Adolphus has prayed for a dis-

pensation, which has been accorded him.

Val's countenance had cleared again, and he cordially accosted the last arrivals.

'That's all right. So glad to see you! Just in time for the first chord on the pianoforte. Why, what's the matter?' abruptly, as Lady Brereton paused on the threshold, glancing doubtfully at the well-filled concert-room. 'O, there are seats in front,' he continued. 'Allow me.'

She took his arm and brushed along between the ranks up to where, just below the *estrade*, with a row of low orange, lemon, and oleander trees between, a group of seats had been expressly reserved by him for such a contingency.

Gervase pushed back his chair; screened by the shrubs he was not conspicuous either to the performers or the lookers-on. For once in his life he desired to efface himself, if only to enjoy the music without having to listen to the tedious criticisms of other people and respond to them politely.

Val, posted behind Lady Brereton's chair, was still in a state of unrest, now hurrying off to interrogate Brutus: Was he sure that all had come now, and that everything was right and the artists ready? then running behind the scenes to ascertain for himself and give the signal.

A faint delicious scent of aromatic plants filled the air; soft breezes came wafting in from the entrance-door; the lights, skilfully grouped, played with the foliage of the shrubs, and irradiated the white statues between: here it was a faun sleeping under a laurel; here the lithe limbs of an Eastern dancing-girl gleamed between red lilies and white azaleas, or a group of little elves played round a fountain amid ferns and water-plants. And in

more than one place, conspicuous among less ambitious productions, there stood out a sculptor's masterpiece, some startlingly beautiful and lifelike figure, as you might fancy a daughter of man, of more than mortal fairness, who, flying from the pursuit of an amorous god, and praying for deliverance, had been turned to marble. Then, upon this paradise of subdued and harmonious beauty, there rose the sounds of exquisite music.

The novelty, the uniqueness of the scene, were pleasantly bewildering at first; it was only when the spectators had listened to a pianoforte sonata and one or two songs that they began thoroughly to realise what a treat Val had prepared for them.

It was the moment for Laurence to appear, and active curiosity was at its height. There are musicians, as there are actors, who, though we hear them times out of number, always leave expectation alive and eager, always offer something new and unforeseen to surprise and delight us. She came on, to receive a signal favourite's genuine welcome. (Brutus, who worshipped the ground she trod upon, could have prostrated himself in adoration at the mere sight of her.)

'How audacious,' thought Diana instantly, 'to appear in a Greek dress!' The face was admirable, she owned; but such simple drapery must betray the slightest ungraceful movement or imperfection of outline.

On second thoughts she must admit the audacity well timed. The resemblance with the marble figure in the background was striking; and the irrepressible artists commented on the superiority of Val's luck to Pygmalion's, whose studio had to choose between a statue or a nymph, whereas Romer's had both.

The delicate influences abroad to-night had wrought on Laurence herself, quickening her sensibilities, soothing away all incongruous impressions, inspiring her to put forth her highest powers. Comparison between her and the singers and players that had preceded her seemed impossible; good artists though they were, the difference was an impassable difference, like that between real and machine-made lace and jewelry. All present must feel it in some degree. It made the most obtuse and commonplace listeners appreciative; they did not talk or look about or make flippant irrelevant criticisms.

A sort of pleasing intoxication was gaining hold on Gervase, and he ended by abandoning himself to it entirely, enhanced as it was by an intoxicating sense of triumph. That girl there, the young queen of the night, with a personal charm that made women savage, and a musical gift by which she could sway the wills and affections of a crowd to an extent any demagogue might envy;—bearing these treacherous distinctions *sans reproche* too, so far, treading the perilous ways of life, unerringly and fearlessly, as the mountaineer's child treads precipitous paths—her heart was yielding as Diana's, unowned, had yielded, as Linda's had yielded. To others a wonder and a curiosity, to him a woman, created for love.

Slight account could he have given of the items of the programme that came between Laurence's first solo and her last, which ended the concert. The bill of fare was short; Val wished to leave his guests hungry, he said.

The little temple echoed with impetuous applause. Then came a lull; people rose, began to move about and give articulate utterance to their sentiments. In particular

the art-students, modestly hanging back near the door of the room, kept up a kind of litany of admiration.

'She phrases better than Araci himself. How could he teach her?'

'Bah, the angels taught her!' responded the enthusiast. 'Either they came down for the purpose, or she went to heaven to learn from them.'

'But she is killing herself,' said one despondingly, shaking his head; 'she puts too much nerve-force into her playing; it is exhausting.'

'No,' replied the first thoughtfully. 'She is over-sensitive certainly, but she cannot die, not yet, no more than the angels you spoke of.'

Lady Brereton was, perhaps, the only person present who was not caught by the general *furor*. Hitherto she had been always the first to lavish encomiums on Mdlle. Therval. Perhaps the musical enthusiasm of the guests in general, or of the host in particular, seemed to her excessive; she would not join in it to-night. Presently she glanced round to look for Gervase, and smiled. He had disappeared.

The audience were scattering slowly. It was a fine warm night, and most went off to explore the garden. A very few lingered in the temple to inspect the statuary attentively and at leisure.

Lady Brereton had not left her seat. Val was in attendance upon her, bringing her ices and refreshments and so forth. He was not so adroit in these matters as Mr. Damian, but his *gaucherie* and goodwill amused her. She was gracious, winning, talkative—grew grave and thoughtful when she alluded to the fact that she and her husband were returning to London shortly: Val looked

grave also at the mention of it and decidedly embarrassed. Only too well had she succeeded in unsettling his life-plan at last.

'Well, and is it to be Italy or England?' she asked presently, taking the bull by the horns. 'Is your choice made?'

Val shook his head, and looked down uneasily.

'How if the choice were not mine to make?'

'Whose then?' she asked incredulously.

'An artist's life is a life of bondage,' he said, 'for all that it is the fashion to think of us as free as air. We have made a pact with a power stronger than ourselves, and the conditions hamper us at every turn, every step.'

She laughed.

'Certainly I did not know that; I thought artists were allowed liberty of conscience, license of action, to the point of scandalising inartistic orthodox people; and that they needed it too, as without the greatest latitude they could not get on to the greatest altitude their genius can attain.'

'Ah, now you touch on another matter altogether,' he rejoined, with animation; 'but there, too, you are wrong. For instance, an artist who tampers with the integrity of his conscience and character loses double; for he not only lowers himself, but his art along with him.'

'Come now, is it not proverbial,' she objected, 'that the lives of the greatest of them have seldom been remarkable for puritanical strictness and consistency?'

'For uprightness and honesty, you mean: say it at once,' said Val plainly. 'Well, suppose it is so; the more reason, surely, for those who can to try and vindicate their name.' He paused, then reiterated with emphasis, 'What you say is true—too true.'

Those among us who feel the slur on the confraternity, and know it deserved, should look to it, if they can't remove the reproach, not to add to it, at all events, but keep their names above contempt, and show the world that an artist can be as irreproachable as—an archbishop!' he concluded ironically, with a bow.

She laughed back.

'I shall shock you, I fear,' she returned, 'by what I am going to say; but we are talking frankly and generalising, are we not? Suppose he has done so, suppose he has been immaculate, and can return thanks that he is not as other artists are. Well, he is not a bishop,' she said, smiling, 'so episcopal virtues are not expected of him; and the question is, will he be the better or the worse in his own capacity? Is the game worth the candle for him?'

'Not if he regards himself as the beginning and end of all things, and thinks the Almighty made the world and its contents as a toyshop for him alone. But if he sees himself as he is, a spring in that mighty machine, it follows that the more prominent his name in any particular capacity, the deeper his general responsibility. If virtue is a good thing in itself, how should it be of no account in an artist? Though very likely it may be a harder battle for him to practise it. Health is of just as great consequence to an engine-driver as to his passengers, though it may be more difficult for him to preserve.'

'Say rather that he must needs be reckless of it,' she murmured.

Val went on—he was warming with his subject.

'I say that every individual bears in his character a power he must exercise, whether he will or no, over his fellow-men. The successful conspicuous artist, who

leaves an unsullied name behind him, is a saviour to others, who, if they don't keep out of the mire altogether, at least are ashamed to sink so low.'

'And where shall we find this *rara avis*?' she asked. 'It is hardly to the lives of geniuses that we must look for a model of private virtue.'

'Nay, I can meet you there,' he said confidently; 'and we have not far to look. I think we saw one not a year ago.'

'You mean?' interrogatively.

'I mean—our only violin-player.'

'Mdlle. Therval?' Impossible to describe the significance, the mixture of polite incredulity, light amusement, and pity conveyed by her tone, and that clashed on Val's ears like a discord. 'May I ask your opinion of her?' she continued. 'Not of her playing, of course; that, I grant, is beyond praise or criticism.'

'I take her for a high-minded woman—' he began.

Diana caught him up.

'One whom you might put forward as an ideal example for any other—your sister, your wife?'

'Undoubtedly, if I were favoured with such encumbrances.'

'In spite of the Bohemian life she has to lead?'

'I say she has an innate purity of character that lifts her above the little dangers and the great dangers to which an existence like hers is exposed.'

'Una and the lion, in short,' said Lady Brereton. 'Go on.'

'Mdlle. Therval, or I am much mistaken, feels that her prominent position in the world thrusts on her other aims and duties besides the maintenance of her professional eminence.'

Diana's eyes sought his compassionately.

'Mr. Romer, you have an ar-

tist's, a poet's imagination, and choosing, as you do, to live apart from society you keep your illusions. I would give anything to be able to idealise, like you, to go music-mad, and deify Mdlla. Therval. But I live in the world as it is, not one of my own making or metamorphosing. With regard to that girl, however, you are not the only one whose eyes have got a seal upon them.'

'Break it, then,' said Val, with brusque indignation and defiance. Again she laughed.

'O, but you will forgive her! Men do not quarrel with a woman, because she is—weak.'

'My life on it that she is not!' said Val eagerly. 'Well, I grant I do look on her as a rare instance, and feel abashed in her presence, like a good Catholic in a church.'

His reverential tone piqued and irritated Diana deeply.

'I detest scandal,' she said, 'and should never be the first to cast a stone at any one. Still, what is the talk of Rome, or soon will be, it is better you should hear in time, especially if it concerns you nearly. If you went more into society you would be *au fait*, and have nothing to learn from me. You keep out of sight of the march of events, and therefore think they stand still. Mdlla. Therval—'

'Well?'

'She has a lover,' said Diana. 'Now, to begin with, you are jealous.'

'Nay; but I know of several,' said Val, laughing. 'Three of my own pupils I could name as on the list. One of them wasted a whole morning in writing a sonnet to her—wretched stuff it was. Another—confound him!—spoil a statue of mine by thinking of her and not of his chisel. The third is so far gone that he has given the bust of Coriolanus he

is moulding the features of a young lady of twenty-two.'

'You laugh, but I am in earnest,' she persisted gently. 'I speak, in the first place, of a lover she does not repel.'

Val's eyes challenged hers.

'Gervase Damian.'

'Damian?'

The arrow had hit the mark, as appeared in the quick impotent rejoinder:

'It is not true.'

The studio was filling again.

'Shall we go and join the others in the garden?' said Diana.

Val acquiesced; they resumed their dialogue out of doors in the starlight.

'How it startles you!' she resumed presently. 'Clearly you know neither Gervase, nor—forgive me—Mdlla. Therval.'

'Certainly I don't know, or desire to know, Mr. Damian,' Val returned promptly; 'but I presume he is a gentleman and a man of honour.'

'Well?'

There was a pause; his mind writhed helplessly under the inroads of a dreary cynicism.

'But it is infamous!' he burst out all of a sudden, wildly.

'Stop,' interposed Diana gently. 'I know Mr. Damian—well enough to speak for him here; and I can tell you most positively your imagination is running away with you if you see in all this a fiend duping a saint. He never stooped to speak false words to win love; he never needed to,' she added, under her breath. 'If he and Laurence Therval love each other, and yet there can be no question of a lasting union between them, do you suppose she is not aware of that as well as he?'

Val was not at all romantic; the practical bearings of a situation would often strike him so vividly as to blind him to all

other possible aspects. A miasma seemed to diffuse itself in his mind; his pretty fancies sickened and dwindled. He was hit, and hit hard. Likely enough his imagination had made an impossible creature of the girl. Might not Lady Brereton be right after all, and abnegation, unerring rectitude, and self-conquest be impracticable for those who, 'living to please,' must 'please to live'? A confused mass of ideas crowded his head. The girl had an earnest passionate nature; the fellow—well, the devil was in him, as poor Val would have expressed it. Deep down was another mournful reflection. So she loved Gervase Damian, and would never love him.

'Ah, there they are!' the words escaped Diana involuntarily, in a sudden whisper.

'Where?' Val demanded sharply.

It might be chance; it might be that Diana, whose life was a series of petty subtle devices, had purposely been drawing him in this direction. Away from the crowd, at the bottom of the garden-walk, she had observed two forms, in one of which she recognised her cousin, moving in and out among the magnolia-bushes. Val and Lady Brereton, lost in the deep shadow cast by a tree, stopped short for a moment—the two figures before them were standing still, facing each other. Gervase's companion was muffled in a long cloak and hood; but beneath these Val had discerned a trailing white robe and black tresses.

Gervase was holding both her hands, and gazing down at her fondly and fixedly.

'Renza, look at me.'

She raised her head, the hood fell back, and Val saw Laurence's face radiant in the moonlight.

'Faust and Marguerite, but

with a difference,' murmured Lady Brereton just audibly in his ear. 'Come, I have no wish to play Mephistopheles myself,' and she drew him away.

Val was scarcely listening. One who really loved the man would have been sorry for him as he said, in a strange hardened accent,

'Forgive me, Lady Brereton. Time will decide between us, perhaps, that you are right.'

But Diana's only sense was one of triumph.

CHAPTER XXI.

LAURENCE TO GERVASE.

'I AM leaving Rome; leaving you, and for always, if it must be so. I may not come back whilst you are there, and you must not come where I am. You know it, as I do. The world holds us apart.'

'When you read this I shall already be far from here. It is accident takes me away; but not before I had given my word and my will to go where we shall not meet, whilst I can will it.'

'You have your world, for which to live. I am going to try and live again for mine, as I used; to live on, just as if I had never known that there is anything better and dearer, never felt what I feel now in saying good-bye.'

Once, twice, Gervase had read through this letter, unable to take it in. Reluctance to understand had made him stupid. The sense, as he realised it, cut away the ground from under his feet. She loved him, and therefore left him, to end, as only parting could end, the relation springing up between them.

The break, its suddenness, threw him into a tempest of vexation. He felt wounded and wronged. His chagrin vented itself in an outburst of bitterness towards her who had caused it. She had never loved him. Coldness and egotism had led to her flight. He said to himself that a true woman, having confessedly given her heart, would not have looked back or forward, but have forgotten everything, heeded no sacrifice, ready blindly to yield up all for her love. Then his heart revolted at its own injustice; for he knew even then that she loved him better than he deserved. What was it she said?—'The world holds us apart.'

'You and I can reckon independently of the world,' he had thought recklessly; 'we meet above it, on the vantage-ground of a mutual feeling that not one in a million knows anything about. Who shall forbid us to love? Laws—human social laws—do not bind artists and geniuses. Their wings need exemption; they would break them else against the narrow boundaries that shut in other women's lives.'

Could she have so far done him injustice as to reckon his feeling for her among transient fancies? He must have loved her well; for his life—a life men called 'brilliant'—seemed to him at this moment, without her, as insipid and distasteful as that of a blind man. He said he would follow her. He cursed the accident that had kept him away from the Piazza San Matteo all yesterday—a sudden official errand of importance that had taken him posting out of Rome, whither he only got back late at night. But in a day or two his temporary duties here expired. A couple of months of leisure and liberty lay before him.

He would go and find her, and explain.

What was there to explain? No misunderstanding is here. If he goes, he goes to delude, not to make clear. Let him assume to himself a man's right to instability—to love, if he chooses, in fifty directions. But Laurence was one of those in whom passion is not a firework that blazes and dies, leaving the darkness blacker than before, but a light whence springs the star of enduring eternal affection. Here that could not be, so she will none of it. She on her side has the constancy of woman's nature to vindicate, and instinctively abides by a law within her, that is heard when men's laws fail.

The fact—an *aperçu* of it, at least—met him like a rock, against which, if he chose to beat, he must wreck. Inaction was the most distressing of all. He would go off to the Piazza San Matteo, ascertain exactly what had occurred, how and whither she had gone, and whether alone.

Madame Araciél was at home and out of temper, partly at Laurence's departure, partly at being surprised, by the early visitor, in shabby morning apparel, only good enough for the eyes of Domenico and Cherubina.

'Such a misfortune! So provoking!' she began, forcing a smile. Both strove vainly to look conventionally pleasant. Never did two more habitually amiable persons meet with more ominously clouded countenances. Seeing him thus, Madame dropped the mask helplessly, and then her honeyed tone changed to one of fretfulness.

'The child has gone off, and all in the wildest hurry. My poor silly husband took it into his head yesterday to telegraph to beg her to come and play at a concert a day or two hence, for which they are in difficulties, he says, and she

has left us. It is folly. Did not the physicians forbid her to play in public for at least three months more? Indeed, Mr. Damian,' she concluded plaintively, 'I did my best to dissuade, to detain her; but she was determined. If I had locked the door, she would have gone by the window; if I had shut the window, she would have flown out of the roof.'

'She will come back?' said Ger-vase interrogatively.

'O, she will come back,' said Madame hastily; but she could not dissemble, and her tone was the reverse of convincing. 'I cannot see why she was so bent on going. When she gets to Milan, she will find there is no need. I told her it was a whim of Aracieli's, and she would have her journey for nothing; but she is so wilful. At least, no—she is an angel; but she had made up her mind to leave Rome, and so—'

Their eyes met. Madame Aracieli wanted to be Laurence's apologist. She was rather vain of her child's conquest, and even when common sense whispered to her how baseless were those visions of a grand marriage here for Renza that had visited her imagination, she had not been troubled by any sort of apprehensions, as if it had been a serious matter. Laurence must expect to have people fall in love with her. Had not she, Madame Aracieli, when a girl, had a great deal of trouble with her numerous admirers? It was a professional *artiste's* lot; she must learn to keep them at a distance, of course, but gracefully, so as not to endanger her popularity. The idea of sending a *preux chevalier* to the right-about in this fashion!

She rambled on. Whatever fresh particulars he gathered served but to reimpress upon him the simple truth—that Laurence's resolution, with which he had no

right to quarrel, was unalterable; that he must not follow her, nor write, except in her own spirit; that he would not even further his cause by persistence.

'You will come and see us again,' said poor Madame entreatingly, as he took leave. 'The child has promised to write to us,' she added. 'I do not feel as if I knew what will happen next. And we were to have passed a charming summer all together at Frascati! You will come over there and see us?'

'If I am in Rome,' he replied, in quick evasion.

'What? Are you, then, likely to leave?'

'Very.'

The reply startled Madame out of her good manners and discretion.

'Where are you going?' she asked uneasily.

'That is more than I know myself. But I do not remain here an hour longer than I am obliged.'

He had spoken hastily, on the impulse of the moment, but was in the mood for sudden decisions. He felt his moorings broken, and that of all places on the globe Rome was the one to him in which forgetfulness and philosophy and resignation were least possible.

As he walked away from the Piazza San Matteo, his plans became quickly more definite. There were a hundred things he could do, and one that he could not—remain in Rome, where every column, every tree, every stone, seemed to remind him of a heavenly dream broken, his highest desire denied to him.

Passing the Villa Nuova, he bethought him of looking in for a farewell call. The Brereton's were going over to Tivoli for a week, and he meant to be far away by the time they returned.

Although the habit of self-con-

trol enabled him to conceal from Diana the ill-humour that he had scarcely taken the trouble to repress before Madame Araciél, his cousin's perceptions, well on the alert, were not easily to be baffled.'

She exhibited slight surprise when he apprised her of his departure, and said,

'A sudden plan, surely.'

Gervase replied evasively,

'It is only a day or two since I knew I should be off duty here. You know my leave of absence from Germany expires shortly. I have only a few weeks left, and shall spend them in travel, I think.'

Diana's lip curled.

'Yes,' she remarked, 'the attractions of Rome are falling off one by one. The Franklins have left, the opera closes to-morrow. By the way, is it true what I hear, that Mdlle. Therval has deserted—gone to—Milan, I think?'

She raised her eyes to his. There was a look on his face so new to her that, although she had known him all her life, she felt as if in the presence of a stranger.

'We are old friends,' he said, after a pause. 'I think you have guessed my secret; I do not grudge it you; and to you alone I now tell this. She and I leave here for the same reason. The reason is, we have to forget each other.'

Diana was nonplused.

'I may go to join my people on the Riviera,' he continued, 'eventually; I hardly know yet.'

Her perplexity was considerable. Gervase had intimated most clearly that he was not going to Milan; still she felt privately incredulous, then dismissed all consideration of the matter. After all, it was idle vulgar curiosity. What were her cousin's *amours* to her?

Gervase rose.

'Shall you be in Rome again before you start for Germany?' she asked.

'No,' he said, 'not if I can help it. In any case, you are returning to London so soon that this is likely to be a long farewell.'

At this instant Mr. Romer was announced. He was going over with the Breretons to Tivoli. Gervase, *distracted* and preoccupied, took merely mechanical notice of him before leaving. Val was on the *qui-vive*, however; he had caught the last words spoken.

'Mr. Gervase Damian is leaving Rome, then?' he said, in a sharp inquisitive tone when the door closed upon him.

'So it appears,' said Lady Brereton carelessly.

'Do you know where for?' he asked.

'No; that he would not tell me: he is going to travel about, to amuse himself. In the course of the summer he will have to be at his post again in Germany, you know.'

Val's countenance was a curious study. He had forgotten himself, and remained for some while in absolute silence, which Lady Brereton thought fit not to break. At last, rousing himself from his abstraction, he saw her looking, as it were, down upon him from a mental height, half-amused, but not ungracious.

'I beg your pardon,' he stammered, abashed. 'I lose my head to-day. I do not know what is the matter with me. I have been over-working.'

'You have shut yourself up too much lately, indeed,' she said, with the gentlest implied reproach. 'Is it not possible to overdo that sort of monastic asceticism? It seems to me an artist should see something of the world he is to portray.'

There was another long silence. Then Val said quietly,

'You are right. I know nothing of the world. You do.' There

was the distinctest significance in his accent. She had grown serious and interested, as he continued, 'I have received this morning a letter from England, offering me an important commission.' He produced the communication and put it into her hand. 'May I ask, do I owe this distinction and the flattering manner in which it is conferred to your intervention?'

'Mr. Romer owes nothing to any one but himself,' she said.

But Val knew that for such repayment he might long have waited had it not been for powerful friends somewhere.

'Do you accept the commission, then, or refuse?'

He replied simply, 'There are favours not to be refused.'

'Ah!'

Her tone was that of one making a discovery; it was rallying, too. She was looking down at a curious piece of silk embroidery lying on the sofa, absently pulling out the fluffy petals of a non-descript pink flower.

'Then, after all,' she resumed, 'we may perhaps see you in England, at Hawkwood, one of these days?'

'Lady Brereton,' said Val, 'I have undertaken the commission. That means that by the summer the Villa Marta will be to let for a year, and I shall be in London for so much time.'

CHAPTER XXII.

SURPRISES.

TOWARDS evening Gervase was returning to his lodgings on the Pincio, in a state of mind compared to which the troubled sea is peace and blessedness. Everything grated on him horribly. There seemed a deadly chill in the air; the streets were gloomy; the population squalid and poverty-

stricken; the foreigners detestable, with their loud voices and pretentious airs. Did he descry an acquaintance approaching in the distance, he rapidly turned aside, ready to walk a mile to avoid an intrusive fellow-creature. He felt as if he could have murdered his dearest friend for laying hold of him at that moment, and hailed the sight of his own door as of a safe sanctuary.

Lacy was on the threshold. His master's countenance warned him to be dumb and obliterate himself. Unfortunately that was out of the question. There was a lady-visitor waiting to see Mr. Damian, who must be duly apprised of the pleasure in store for him.

'A lady? Who, then?'

'She did not give her name, sir; she said she must wait till you came in. I told her I didn't know when you would be home, sir; but she would leave no message, sent away the carriage, and said she would wait.'

Lacy had one fault: he never did the wrong thing, and thus gave you no decent excuse for rating him when it would have been the greatest relief to do so.

Gervase, provoked and worsted, brushed by impatiently into the sitting-room, where stood a lady in black, very much muffled up. As he shut the door she lifted her veil.

'Linda!'

If anything could have been devised by some mocking evil spirit as calculated to intensify an irritation of mind already past bearing, it was surely this.

His tone, his look, chilled her somewhat, and threw her into slight confusion. In adventuring this random unannounced visit she had chosen to risk its falling *mal à propos*. It had been a false move. She could have borne that

discovery. But there was something in his manner and expression, something that would hardly have betrayed itself had she not chanced upon him in a moment when mental exhaustion had deprived him of his ordinary self-command, that startled her; it was distant, and presently kindled in her a spark of keen resentment.

'Ah, you are surprised to see me,' she began, inquisitively, tentatively, loth to trust the truth of her first impressions.

'Surprised, yes. Has anything happened?' he asked, speaking hurriedly and at hazard. 'What has brought you to Rome? What brings you—here—just now?'

He was looking at her; perplexed himself. Six months had made a change in Linda that she little suspected. The deteriorating forces had got the upper hand at last, and when once they begin to tell on the surface they do their work with astonishing rapidity. Her colouring, the brightness of her eyes, seemed entirely artificial now; her features were losing all their delicacy; her theatrical manner, loud voice, unrestrained gestures, every touch accentuated to the point of vulgarity—they repelled him, like colours and sounds violently discordant. Perhaps the inevitable contrast with another image made him exaggerate the alteration; but the hopeless feeling of estrangement he experienced he could not for the life of him altogether disguise. He seemed to see farther down hill. Already the frank sweetness, the youthful *abandon*, that had given her prettiness its peculiar charm, were vanishing fast. Another year and there would be nothing left of the charm. How far behind him he seemed to have left the phase in which he could have

cared for Mademoiselle Linda Visconti!

The more she talked, reminding him of that phase which could no more come again than last year dead and gone, the more irked, goaded, and alienated he felt. The increasing distance of his manner was so marked that Linda, though still far from surmising the infinite distance of mind implied, felt at a loss how to meet it.

'You don't look pleased to see me, I confess,' she said by and by, piqued.

'You ought to have written,' said Gervase, trying not to show the impatience that fretted him, but thereby only succeeding in speaking sternly, 'if you wanted to know anything of me. What could you have been thinking of to come here without so much as letting me hear you were in Rome?'

'If I wanted anything of you,' repeated Linda pleadingly. 'I wanted to see you, *caro mio*, not your handwriting.'

The contraction on Gervase's brow deepened. She looked at him with all the old fond lavish admiration. Ah, he was not altered a line, or if so, he seemed only more distinctly above other men in all attractive personal qualities than even she remembered him. Again she yielded to the charm, clinging blindly to a treacherous recollection, and yet felt her hold on hope escaping her.

'I had to pass through Rome, on my way to fulfil an engagement in North Italy,' she said presently. 'I did not wish it to be known here—for private reasons, family troubles, not my own matters.'

She spoke hurriedly, and with embarrassment; but Gervase was far too occupied with his own thoughts to perceive it.

'I heard you were here still,'

she continued. 'Saw your name in the list of the people at the ambassador's *fête*; by that I knew you were not dead'—reproachfully—'still, I thought I would like to convince myself, so I came.'

'It was not well judged of you,' he said coldly; vexed with himself for seeming harsh, but struggling vainly against the sense of rasping annoyance. 'I am leaving Rome unexpectedly, to join my own people on the Riviera, and have a great deal on my hands.'

He seemed harassed to death. The longer she stayed the more painfully her presence jarred upon him. She felt that, and it exasperated her.

'O, I see,' she said, tossing her head. 'You are ashamed of me; you are afraid to be seen talking to an actress.'

Gervase, to check a sharp answer, did not answer at all.

'Your English friends,' she went on tauntingly, 'are very particular. But you usen't to be such a slave to them and their rules; you used to laugh and say they would always give you absolution, and let you off confession. What is the matter? Are you turned *dévo*t? Are you married?'

Gervase, incensed, lost patience and moderation.

'What is that to you?' he asked impatiently.

Linda did not defend herself.

'I did not know when else I should see you again, unless I came,' she said, half petulantly, half appealingly; 'after all this long while at Cairo, and hearing nothing of one another.'

'I heard of you,' said Gervase briefly, with unintentional significance.

Linda shrugged her shoulders and bit her lip. Strange to say, Gervase's words, though they conveyed condemnation, had con-

soled her a little. Mdlle. Visconti had made herself a good deal talked of during her sojourn in Egypt. She would have preferred, on the whole, that these matters should not have reached Gervase's ears. Still, if, as she now chose to infer, he could be jealous, there was hope yet of captivating him again. The present moment, however, was clearly the worst she could have chosen for the purpose.

'Well, I am going,' she said abruptly. 'You are angry with me for coming, I see.'

Gervase did not contradict her, nor attempt to detain her by word or look. The parting—mechanical courtesy on his side, sullen taciturnity on hers—was brief. Linda had turned fractious and morose. She even refused to have a carriage called for her. No, she would go on foot.

At last he was alone—free to succumb to the strain of vexation that had been on him all day. Linda's image was promptly dismissed. Its intrusion just then had tortured him to a degree he could hardly forgive. The best thing was to forget.

For the first time in his life he had a sense of defeat and disappointment amounting to bankruptcy. Till now, to desire and will immensely had with him meant to obtain, and the desire of the impossible was a disease from which his soul was exempt.

Perhaps he owed Fortune a heavy debt for past prosperity, that he must needs set his affections on a girl like Laurence, whose round of life was almost as far removed from his own as if she had been a gipsy; and secondly, that she should be snatched away rudely out of his sight and dreams, just as he had made the delightful discovery that the first and only love of that delicate spirit was more than half won.

It was as if a voice said, 'You have had your share of this world's goods and pleasures; full measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over; but—the romance of your life is not to be written.'

At that moment he felt it the only thing worth caring for. Had he not seen the best the world can give of most other things? For the first time he longed absorbingly for what could not be—to have Laurence once again beside him, her hand in his hand, her cheek against his,—if he were to die for it!

Linda emerged into the street half beside herself with mortification, incensed by the consciousness that she had herself to blame for everything. She had acted like a fool. Well, she had expiated her folly—we invariably do—though not unfrequently we escape the penalty of guilt. But was it possible? He cared for her no longer, he despised her; she repelled him, and he did not mind if she knew it. The thought was maddening, every way; she felt she would have liked to do him an injury, make him feel what she was feeling now. Yet his crime was not that he had ceased to love her, but that she loved him still; loved him to that point that even now, in the face of plain broad facts, she refused to believe that there was an end of everything. She thought herself philosophical and rational, poor Linda—had made up her mind to it that some day (not yet though) he would marry some fine lady, with a fortune or a title, or both; some one, though, whom he would never love as he had loved Linda.

Indifferent to her already? No; she must have more proof before she could admit that. He was tired

and bored to-day, not himself, depressed and preoccupied; men are like that—easily worried and put out of tune. She would write, he would write and explain away his coldness and *brusquerie*; she was conjuring up his letter in her head as she went.

Just then a touch on her shoulder made her start. She was returning to her hotel, not far distant, by way of a narrow winding deserted alley. Turning quickly she saw a figure—a Campagna peasant by his close-fitting blue garb—a beggar was it?—his sheepskin cloak and slouched hat concealed his features effectually, but the glance of his eyes startled her, so like her own.

'Bruno!' she ejaculated, appalled, in a whisper. Her evident impulse was to flee; but he had taken hold of her hand, and she saw she was not to escape. Opposite them was the portico of a little church; he made a sign, marshalling her towards it.

'Go in, I will speak with you there.'

Linda obeyed, trembling in every limb. The old habit of submission had proved too strong at the moment, or she would have called for help—ready to seek any sort of protection against one who in his mildest days had always given her cause for fear, and in whom she must now behold a desperate man—a criminal and fanatic in one. Rumour had reached her of his having got into trouble. How came he then to be free, and walking about in Rome? Was he going to threaten? Well, after his last exploit, he could not throw stones at her. It was money he wanted, no doubt. She must get rid of him at any price.

A small dull place of worship was San Mercurio, the least inviting of the three hundred and sixty-five churches standing in

Rome. As the curtain over the entrance-door fell back again with a heavy thud, Linda shuddered to see that the building was entirely empty. A solitary oil-lamp or two at a shrine broke the murky darkness. Linda made her way to the remotest of the side-chapels, with a hearty prayer to the saint (whoever it might be) whose effigy stared her in the face, and there sat awaiting her fate with a thumping heart, but already considering how she could induce Bruno to be moderate in his pecuniary demands.

The ragged figure followed her stealthily, came and stood and placed himself where, screened by a pilaster, he could see the church-door, and have warning of the approach of intruders or eavesdroppers.

'Bruno,' began Linda, passing her hand over her forehead in a maze, 'I heard dreadful things of you. They were not true?'

'Repeat what you heard.'

'That you had been accused—convicted—' she stammered.

'Of stealing,' he said savagely. 'Speak it out!'

'On some charge; I dared not inquire closely.' She had been in terror lest this relationship, of which she had never boasted, might transpire. 'All that reached me was a report that you had been sentenced to prison.'

'I have been in prison,' he said.

Linda hid her face, and forgot all prudence at these words.

'Bruno, Bruno, never, never could I have believed that of you! I can't bear to think of it.'

His tight grasp laid on her arm recalled her to herself, and made her repent her vehemence. She was too frightened now to scream or to proceed with her tirade.

'It was false!' he said fiercely. 'I rob? I attack an unarmed man? You should know me better.'

'It was a mistake then altogether,' said Linda eagerly. 'A mistake of identity. You were accused for some other man: I never thought of that.'

'Yes—listen to me,' and he resumed more quietly, but something in his voice chilled her afresh with a nameless fear. 'They swore away my life, my liberty, for me as if it had been a dog's. The gentleman had been bitten—I was only a cur, whether the right or no what matter? One less let loose in the streets.'

'What a shame!' said poor Linda, as sympathetically as she could.

Bruno laughed under his breath.

'It will always be so, whilst we let them have the upper hand. Devils! This is their way with us, the people. Justice?' and he laughed. 'Let the sheep and oxen men kill for food ask for it; we shall not get it, no more than they, by begging. Who will avenge the wrong done to me on the man who caused it? Did he sleep the worse that night? He would now, if he knew I was free.'

'Was he a Roman—a noble, perhaps?' asked Linda soothingly.

Her brother looked at her with an indescribable cunning and veiled curiosity, but feigned not to hear the question.

'My friends here shun me like the pestilence. They say they believe me innocent, but fight shy of the escaped convict—think it enough not to betray me.'

'I don't understand,' said Linda, 'how you come to be free.'

'I escaped as we were being taken across the country.'

'And you come to Rome? What madness!' she gasped.

'The safest spot in the world,' he retorted. 'They are scouring the provinces in search of me. I am in hiding, in the Campagna, with—peasants.'

'Peasants! Brigands you mean!' said Linda wildly. 'For Heaven's sake, dear Bruno, do nothing desperate, nothing that will bring disgrace on our father's name.'

'Disgrace!' He laughed, and looked at her, saying, with derisive emphasis, 'No, my pretty sister, I leave that to you.'

Linda was too frightened to retaliate or even to be angry. She resorted to stroking and coaxing. 'Well, dear Bruno,' she resumed, 'I never believed you guilty, not for an instant. You know I never heard the full story. I inquired about you before coming to Rome, and then heard you were in prison; it shocked me terribly. If there is anything I can do for you now, tell me. My expenses in travelling about are very heavy; still, if you want money—'

'Not your money,' he said roughly; 'thanks for the offer, my little sister. There is nothing you can do for me—of that sort.' He was looking at her oddly.

'Can I go back now?' said Linda, attempting to rise.

'Stop; I want to know something about yourself,' he said, detaining her. 'What were you doing in the Via Sant' Isidoro?'

Her cheeks flushed; Bruno was well-nigh forgotten. The thought of Gervase, brusquely recalled, brought back the bitter flow of indignation. She was longing to speak ill of her lost love to somebody—to her bird or her dog or to Bruno, what matter? Still, instinctive distrust made her cautious.

'How do you know I went there?' she inquired sharply.

'Because I followed you from your hotel. You see you have a brother who is still careful of your reputation,' he said tauntingly.

Linda shrugged her shoulders helplessly.

'Well, I had a visit to pay.'

'The house belongs to some foreigner—a German, eh?' said he, with affected negligence.

'English,' replied Linda. 'Mr. Damian his name is. I knew him first at Bleiburg; he was in Venice, long ago—that is, last year.'

'And he is an artist, is he?' asked Bruno.

'No; he is secretary to the embassy at — but what is all this to you?' she asked, struck by a peculiar expression on his lips.

'Are you not my sister?' he said ironically. 'Should I not resent injustice done to you as to myself? How about this Englishman? Has he deceived you? Has he cheated you? You might trust your revenge to me. I have nothing to lose now.'

'Bruno, you terrify me,' said Linda, in desperation. This was too much. 'I cannot stay to hear you talk so frightfully; you *must* let me go now.'

'How timid she is!' he said, relaxing his hold: he watched her, hesitated, disappointed that the time was not yet ripe—he could wait though. 'Well, away with you. To-day I am only an outcast, no brother for you. But the day may come when they will treat you as they have treated me, play you false, cheat you out of everything you have in life; then you won't stop your ears when I talk of revenge.'

Linda scarcely heard the last words, having availed herself of her leave with alacrity. The peasant remained in the church till night had come on, and then stole out, under cover of its shadows, to rejoin his sheepskin-clad companions on the hills.

THE MOZARTS IN ENGLAND.

PRESERVED amongst other relics in the Mozarteum at Salzburg, is a small piece of 'Superior Court Plaister,' now more than a century old, and looking all its age; but nevertheless yearly contemplated by numerous pilgrims with great interest, not to say veneration. And why? It is the only surviving souvenir of Mozart's visit to England, or at any rate the only one which has found its way to the birthplace of its original owner. Other souvenirs there are in plenty; but they all date from other countries, and refer to a later period in Mozart's life, with the exception of one, his music note-book, into which his father copied sundry exercises and the boy's earliest compositions, written between the ages of four and six. The 'Superior Court Plaister,' then, stands alone; and if, as a relic, somewhat insignificant, it will at least have played a not utterly useless part, so long as it leads to a closer consideration of the visit, of which it is the solitary *Andenken*. A hundred and twelve years, more than four generations of men and musicians have passed away, since the Mozarts, father, mother, daughter, and son, were induced, in the course of a journey through Western Europe, to cross the much-dreaded 'silver streak,' and take up their abode for some few months in the country which had already shown itself no harsh stepmother to more than one German *Tonkünstler*. Leopold Mozart, who was not only a thorough musician (his extant works and his son's progress un-

der his teaching prove that), but a sensible and wide-awake man of the world, and a father whose chief aim in life it was to make the very best of his children—of the two out of seven that remained to him—had already introduced Wolfgang and 'Nannerl' to the Munich and Vienna worlds. Wolfgang indeed had sat in the lap of an Empress, and an Emperor had stood by enchanted while the baby extemporised on the harpsichord. The third tour, that of which London was destined to be the goal, though probably in the first instance Paris was the most distant point aimed at, was begun in 1763, and included visits to almost all the important places between Salzburg and the French capital. At the latter city, Wolfgang's first four sonatas were printed and published, and portraits of the father and two children were painted. But in other respects their stay does not seem to have been either very agreeable or very remunerative. It must be borne in mind that what we now call a 'musical public,' in those days, and, for that matter, for many years afterwards, nowhere existed. Comparatively few members of even the upper middle-class indulged their taste, if they had one, for music, while Philharmonic and choral societies were quite unknown. It was then only among those in high places, and only among the music-lovers even of these (for music was not then, as now, a fashion, but was rather cultivated for its own sake, and by *bond fide* amateurs), that composers or interpre-

ters could hope to find a welcome. Hence it was the ambition of every artist to be received and heard at Court, and in this respect the Mozarts were abundantly successful; for they appeared before the rulers of all the countries they visited. But the French Court, though hospitable, was not musical; and of what music there was, the standard, at least in the opinion of Mozart *père*, was a very low one. Speaking of an air he chanced to hear sung in a Paris church, he says, 'There was nothing whatever in it, it was cold and miserable—in a word, French.' But it was not only with the music that he found fault. The looseness and luxury of Parisian life at that time were very little to the taste of the staid and simple-minded, but withal far-sighted and observant Salzburg Kapellmeister. So it cannot have been with much regret that he turned his back on Paris and broke new ground. Moreover, it may fairly be supposed that he was anxious to get on to England; London being at that day, as it is at this, regarded as the most appreciative market for musical wares of whatever kind.

Arrived in London, they seem to have lost no time in setting to work. They had evidently been furnished, if not with actual letters of introduction, at any rate with the names of numerous members of the aristocracy and others who would be likely in one way or another to prove useful to them. A list of these in the father's handwriting is still to be seen.

No account of little Mozart at this age can be so interesting, especially to English readers, and certainly no other that remains to us is so full or so carefully written, as that furnished by the Hon. Daines Barrington, F.R.S. (a name familiar to lovers of

White's *Selborne*), in a letter to the Royal Society, received Nov. 28, 1769, and read Feb. 15, 1770. It is to be found in the *Philosophical Transactions*, vol. lx., for the year 1770, No. 8 p. 54 sqq. Jahn gives it at length, and it is far too good to be abridged. It is headed, 'Account of a very remarkable young Musician, in a letter from the Hon. Daines Barrington, F.R.S., to Mathew Maly, M.D., Sec. R.S.,' and is as follows:

'Sir,—If I was to send you a well-attested account of a boy who measured seven feet in height when he was not more than eight years of age, it might be considered as not undeserving the notice of the Royal Society. The instance which I now desire you will communicate to that learned body, of as early an exertion of most extraordinary musical talents, seems, perhaps, equally to claim their attention.

'Joannes Chrysostomus Wolfgangus Theophilus (*i.e.* Gottlieb, Amadeo) Mozart was born at Saltzbourg, in Bavaria, on the 27th of January, 1756. I have been informed by a most able musician and composer, that he frequently saw him at Vienna, when he was little more than four years old. By this time he was not only capable of executing lessons on his favourite instrument, the harpsichord, but composed some in an easy style and taste, which were much approved of. His extraordinary musical talents soon reached the ears of the present Empress dowager, who used to place him upon her knees whilst he played on the harpsichord. This notice taken of him by so great a personage, together with a certain consciousness of his most singular abilities, had much emboldened the little musician. Being,

therefore, the next year at one of the German courts, where the Elector encouraged him by saying, that he had nothing to fear from his august presence, little Mozart immediately sat down with great confidence to his harpsichord, informing his Highness that he had played before the Empress. At seven years of age his father carried him to Paris, where he so distinguished himself by his compositions, that an engraving was made of him. The father and sister, who are introduced in this print, are excessively like their portraits, as is also little Mozart, who is stiled "Compositeur et maître de musique, âgé de sept ans." After the name of the engraver follows the date, which is in 1763. Mozart was therefore at this time in the eighth year of his age.

'Upon leaving Paris he came over to England, where he continued more than a year. As during this time I was witness of his most extraordinary abilities as a musician, both at some public concerts, and likewise by having been alone with him for a considerable time at his father's house, I send you the following account, amazing and almost incredible as it may appear. I carried to him a ms. duet, which was composed by an English gentleman to some favourite words in Metastasio's opera of *Demofonte*. The whole score was in five parts, viz. accompaniments for a first and second violin, the two vocal parts, and a base. I shall here likewise mention that the parts for the first and second voice were written in what the Italians stile the *contralto cleff*, the reason for taking notice of which particular will appear hereafter. My intention in carrying with me this ms. composition was to have an irrefragable proof of his abilities as a

player at sight, it being absolutely impossible that he could have ever seen the musick before.

'The score was no sooner put upon his desk than he began to play the symphony in a most masterly manner, as well as in the time and stile which corresponded with the intention of the composer. I mention this circumstance, because the greatest masters often fail in these particulars on the first trial.

'The symphony ended, he took the upper part, leaving the under one to his father. His voice, in the tone of it, was thin and infantine; but nothing could exceed the masterly manner in which he sung. His father, who took the under part in this duet, was once or twice out, though the passages were not more difficult than those in the upper one; on which occasions the son looked back with some anger, pointing out to him his mistakes, and setting him right. He not only, however, did complete justice to the duet, by singing his own part in the truest taste, and with the greatest precision: he also threw in the accompaniments of the two violins, wherever they were most necessary and produced the best effects. It is well known that none but the most capital musicians are capable of accompanying in this superior style.

'As many of those who may be present when this letter may have the honour of being read before the society, may not possibly be acquainted with the difficulty of playing thus from a musical score, I will endeavour to explain it by the most similar comparison I can think of. I must, at the same time, admit that the illustration will fail in one particular, as the voice in reading cannot comprehend more than what is contained in a single

line. I must suppose, however, that the reader's eye, by habit and quickness, may take in other lines, though the voice cannot articulate them, as the musician accompanies the words of an air by his harpsichord.

'Let it be imagined, therefore, that a child of eight years old was directed to read five lines at once, in four of which the letters of the alphabet were to have different powers. For example, in the first line A to have its common powers; in the second, that of B; in the third, that of C; in the fourth, of D. Let it be conceived also that the lines so composed of characters with different powers are not ranged so as to be read at all times one exactly under the other, but often in a desultory manner. Suppose, then, a capital speech in Shakespeare never seen before, and yet read by a child of eight years old with all the pathetic energy of a Garrick. Let it be conceived likewise that the same child is reading, with a glance of the eye, three different comments on this speech tending to its illustration; and that one comment is written in Greek, the second in Hebrew, and the third in Etruscan characters. Let it be also supposed that by different signs he could point out which comment is most material upon every word, and sometimes that perhaps all three are so, at others only two of them. When all this is conceived it will convey some idea of what the boy was capable of in singing such a duet at sight in a masterly manner from the score, throwing in at the same time all its proper accompaniments.

'When he had finished the duet, he expressed himself highly in its approbation, asking with some eagerness whether I had brought any more such music. Having been informed, however, that he

was often visited with musical ideas, to which even in the midst of the night he would give utterance on his harpsichord, I told his father that I should be glad to hear some of his extemporary compositions. The father shook his head at this, saying that it depended entirely upon his being, as it were, musically inspired; but that I might ask him whether he was in humour for such a composition. Happening to know that little Mozart was much taken notice of by Manzuoli, the famous singer who came over to England in 1764, I said to the boy that I should be glad to hear an extemporary "Love-Song," such as his friend Manzuoli might choose in an opera. The boy on this (who continued to sit at his harpsichord) looked back with some archness, and immediately began five or six lines of a jargon recitative proper to introduce a "Love-Song." He then played a symphony, which might correspond with an air composed to the single word *affetto*. It had a first and second part, which, together with the symphonies, was of the length that opera songs generally last; if this extemporary composition was not amazingly capital, yet it was really above mediocrity, and showed most extraordinary readiness of invention.

'Finding that he was in humour and, as it were, inspired, I then desired him to compose a "Song of Rage," such as might be proper for the opera stage. The boy again looked back with much archness, and began five or six lines of a jargon recitative proper to precede a "Song of Anger." This lasted also about the same time with the "Song of Love," and in the middle of it he had worked himself up to such a pitch, that he beat his harpsichord like a person possessed, rising sometimes in his chair. The word he

pitched upon for this second extemporary composition was *per-fido*. After this he played a difficult lesson, which he had finished a day or two before; his execution was amazing, considering that his little fingers could hardly reach a fifth on the harpsichord. His astonishing readiness, however, did not arise merely from great practice; he had a thorough knowledge of the fundamental principles of composition, as upon producing a treble he immediately wrote a base under it, which, when tried, had a very good effect. He was also a great master of modulation, and his transitions from one key to another were excessively natural and judicious; he practised in this manner for a considerable time with a handkerchief over the keys of the harpsichord.

'The facts which I have been mentioning I was myself an eyewitness of; to which I must add that I have been informed by two or three able musicians, when Bach, the celebrated composer, had begun a *fugue* and left off abruptly, little Mozart hath immediately taken it up, and worked it after a most masterly manner. Witness as I was myself of most of these extraordinary facts, I must own that I could not help suspecting his father imposed with regard to the real age of the boy, though he had not only a most childish appearance, but likewise all the actions of that stage of life. For example, whilst he was playing to me a favourite cat came in, upon which he immediately left his harpsichord, nor could we bring him back for a considerable time. He would also sometimes run about the room with a stick between his legs by way of a horse. I found likewise that most of the London musicians were of the same opinion with regard to his

age, not believing it possible that a child of so tender years could surpass most of the masters in that science. I have therefore for a considerable time made the best inquiries I was able from some of the German musicians resident in London, but could never receive any further information than that he was born near Saltzbourg, till I was so fortunate as to procure an extract from the register of that place through his Excellency Count Haslang. It appears from this extract that Mozart's father did not impose with regard to his age, when he was in England; for it was in June 1765 that I was witness to what I have above related, when the boy was only nine years and five months old.

'I have made frequent inquiries with regard to this very extraordinary genius since he left England, and was told last summer that he was then at Saltzbourg, where he had composed several oratorios, which were much admired. I am also informed that the Prince of Saltzbourg, not crediting that such masterly compositions were really those of a child, shut him up for a week, during which he was not permitted to see any one, and was left only with music-paper and the words of an oratorio. During this short time he composed a very capital oratorio, which was most highly approved of upon being performed.

'Having stated the above-mentioned proofs of Mozart's genius when of almost an infantine age, it may not be improper, perhaps, to compare them with what hath been well attested with regard to other instances of the same sort. Amongst these John Barratier hath been most particularly distinguished, who is said to have understood Latin when he was but four years old, Hebrew when

six, and three other languages at the age of nine. This same prodigy of philological learning also translated the travels of Rabbi Benjamin when eleven years old, accompanying his version with notes and dissertations. Before his death, which happened under the age of twenty, Barratier seems to have astonished Germany with his amazing extent of learning; and it need not be said that its increase in such a soil from year to year is commonly amazing. Mozart, however, is now not much more than thirteen years of age, and it is not therefore necessary to carry my comparison further. The Rev. Mr. Mainwaring, in his memoirs of Händel, hath given us a still more apposite instance, and in the same science. This great musician began to play on the clavichord when he was but seven years of age, and is said to have composed some Church Services when he was only nine years old, as also the opera of *Almeria* when he did not exceed fourteen. Mr. Mainwaring likewise mentions that Händel, when very young, was sometimes struck while in bed with musical ideas, and that, like Mozart, he used to try their effect immediately on a spinnet which was in his bed-chamber. I am the more glad to state this short comparison between these two early prodigies in music, as it may be hoped that little Mozart may possibly attain to the same advanced years as Händel, contrary to the common observation that such *ingenia præcocia* are generally short-lived. I think I may say without prejudice to the memory of this great composer that the scale most clearly preponderates on the side of Mozart in this comparison, as I have already stated that he was a composer when he did not much exceed the age of four. His extem-

porary compositions also, of which I was a witness, prove his genius and invention to have been most astonishing; lest, however, I should insensibly become too strongly his panegyrist, permit me to subscribe myself, sir, your most faithful, humble servant,

‘DAINES BARRINGTON.’

Such is the carefully written, and, it must be owned, most interesting account, which has been handed down to us, of Mozart's performances during the sojourn of the family on English soil. There is no reason to suppose that Mr. Barrington was either a partial critic or a writer given to exaggeration. From the numerous letters addressed to him by Gilbert White, it is evident that he was a close and patient observer of all natural phenomena, most unlikely to take on credit any reports of unusual occurrences or striking anomalies in the world of nature; but, on the other hand, never tiring in his endeavours to verify them for his own satisfaction. A man who, apparently, was at the pains to inquire in what keys owls are wont to hoot, and to that end extracted from his friend at Selborne some very curious details on this subject, can scarcely be thought likely to have bestowed upon the performances of so great a musical prodigy as Mozart any less attention than he claims for himself in his letter. Indeed, the probability that all he says is true, is more than confirmed by other letters and newspaper reports, both before and after this date; and the fact, that his account was not presented to the Royal Society until more than four years after the subject of it had left England, would certainly seem to show that it was not written without due deliberation and every regard to accuracy and truth.

Very little further information is forthcoming as to the doings of the Mozarts in London, the father's letters thence, with the solitary exception given above, having never reached the Mozarteum, though there are many dated from other cities. But we know that they gave three very successful public concerts, and also that, on one occasion, when Leopold Mozart was unwell, his little son first began to write orchestral symphonies, which his sister had to copy out for him. They finally left England at the end of July 1765, and their fortunes thenceforward have been amply recorded by Jahn, and other writers. The mother died fifteen years afterwards at Paris, whither she had gone with her son, to make a home for him during his contemplated long stay in that city. It is to her death that we owe some of Wolfgang's most touching letters, which abundantly prove, as do, indeed, *all* his letters to his father and sister, that the goodness and tenderness of the man were not by any means lost in the genius of the musician. The simple-minded Kapellmeister himself lived to see his son acknowledged, if in some quarters somewhat ungraciously, to be the king of living composers, and died, four years before him, at Salzburg. 'Nannerl' married Baron v. Son-

nenburg, and settled at St. Gilgen, about twenty miles from her old home. Becoming a widow in 1801, she returned to Salzburg and gave music-lessons till her death, in 1829. Although, for some years previously, she was afflicted with blindness, her services as a teacher of music were none the less eagerly sought, and her bright kindly nature is not yet forgotten.

And Wolfgang—who does not know *his* fate? How he had to fight his way through innumerable petty jealousies and vexations; how, though his genius was universally recognised, his life from first to last was a struggle for bread, how he died at Vienna in 1791, when barely yet

'Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita;' how there was scarcely one, not even the wife he loved so well, to follow him to the grave; and how, finally, he was buried as a pauper, and his resting-place, save that it is *somewhere* in a large Vienna Friedhof, is as unknown to us as that of Moses. In his life he served as a model of many of the fairest of human virtues, and in his too-early death he added another to the many existing illustrations of the truth of the proverb:

'Fructus idem diuturnus ac præcox esse nequit.'

A. G.

THE MYSTERY IN PALACE GARDENS.

By MRS. J. H. RIDDELL.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A WONDERFUL WOMAN.

AMONGST the first callers at Holyrood House was a certain Miss Banks—the very first caller indeed; for it was a specialty of that lady to assist at the social birth and social death of all the many rich and delightful friends she made and—dropped. She had known the Seaton, and she had gone to the house the very moment she heard of Mr. Seaton's departure with the intention of offering her sympathy to Mrs. Seaton, only that lady refused to see any one. She had penetrated from basement to attic when the 'valuable and fashionable,' &c., were on view. She had attended the auction and jotted down the prices the things fetched; and she had since accompanied several persons with 'orders to view' who thought or who did not think the desirable mansion might suit them as a residence.

Surely there never was a woman with so large an acquaintance. She knew everybody and everybody knew her. She made friends with the Joneses by telling them she had heard so much of them from the Robinsons, and she procured the *entrées* to the Smiths by exactly the same means.

In her style of conversation she adopted towards great persons, or persons who wished to be considered great, a tone of humility which met with much approval.

'It does not matter upon whom I call,' she would often say. 'I am so insignificant a body, it is of no consequence what I do.'

And it was for this reason, perhaps, that Miss Banks constantly seemed throwing herself up in the air to determine which way the wind blew. She decided the social positions of more new-comers to the old suburb than could well be imagined.

'Delightful family, Miss Banks says.'

'Charming woman, Miss Banks tells me.'

'Quite an acquisition to the neighbourhood, Miss Banks declares.'

'Not at all nice people, Miss Banks fears.'

'Something odd about them, Miss Banks thinks.'

'Miss Banks advises caution about visiting them.'

As to who Miss Banks herself was, very few people sifted that mystery to the bottom. Simply as Miss Banks—such a wonderful woman, such a manager, such a useful person, such a reliable creature, such a martyr, such a gleam of sunshine, such a cheerful help in time of trouble—she was known to an enormous number of people resident in Kensington and various other parts of London. She was acquainted with many extraordinary folk, who might have seemed to be, and who indeed were, quite out of her own set; but she found them useful in some way, the reader may be quite sure of that, or Miss Banks would have dropped them, as she was in the habit of dropping those who could not, she found, in any way advance her interests. Only in a great city could such a woman as

Miss Banks have grown to full perfection. In any small town she must soon have exhausted the list of persons willing to be deceived, and forced even by the instinct of self-preservation to cultivate some human sentiment in her friendships.

Ladies were almost unanimous in Miss Banks' praise. Some men evidently had their doubts upon the subject; but then, as their wives said, 'Poor Miss Banks is neither young nor pretty.' Young she certainly was not, and she had never been pretty; but though reasons such as these might have induced great admiration in the feminine mind, they had not much to do with a certain hesitation masculine lips seemed to feel in sounding her praises.

On the whole, perhaps, they had a little too much of Miss Banks; the best song is apt to pall if sung too often, and the lady seemed to pervade her friends' firesides.

She resided with her brother-in-law in a freehold tenement which belonged to that gentleman, and was squeezed in amongst better houses, as a shabby man sometimes gets squeezed in amongst a crowd of well-dressed people. The brother was generally spoken of by Miss Banks' admirers as 'terribly afflicted,' as a 'sad trial,' as a 'poor useless creature,' as an 'awful burden,' as a 'fearful charge'; and every one who spoke on the subject—and a great many did speak about it every day—said 'Miss Banks' conduct was beautiful,' that her devotion was 'beyond praise.'

Now the facts were, first, that the house belonged to the poor 'useless creature'; second, that he had a comfortable pension coming in, which helped to keep things going; third, that Miss Banks had not a halfpenny in the world of her own—nothing except what she could in a ladylike way gain by

the exercise of her wits; and fourth, that she did not attend to the sick man at all. There was a man, a soldier, who had been servant to Mr. Gayford's father when that gentleman was in the army; and this servant now waited upon the invalid, and acted besides as, to quote Miss Banks' own phrase, 'male parlour-maid' in the tiny household. This man was nurse, companion, secretary to the 'fearful charge.' He accompanied him when he went out in his bath-chair; he read the newspaper aloud each morning; he brought him up his meals; he tucked him into bed; and he slept in the same room on a mattress laid generally on the floor, so that he might be close at hand if wanted.

'I always feel easy when I leave him with Niel,' Miss Banks was in the habit of remarking to her friends; and if this were so she could never have felt otherwise than easy, since Mr. Limerton was always left with Niel, and with no other person.

For the rest, when, immediately after her sister's death, Mr. Gayford was attacked by the disease which ultimately reduced him to the state of a living nonentity, Miss Banks had, with her usual 'admirable sense,' put the case before him in the clearest manner.

'If I am to go on living here,' she said—she had resided under his roof ever since his marriage—'and look after your household and your health, I must be sure of the ground I am standing on. I can't be left a pauper in my old age. You are able to make a will now. The doctors say plainly they cannot tell how long that may be the case. You have very little besides your pension and this house; but leave that little to me, and the house, and I will do the best I can for you and myself.'

So said, so done ; the will made, signed, witnessed, locked up with other papers in a box at the office of Mr. Gayford's solicitors, Miss Banks continued to live in the house where she had resided for many years, and which, for all she ever told the world about the matter, might have been her own.

Never had a lady better cause for trying to keep a relative alive, and therefore the invalid was well cared for, well nourished, well doctored, well looked after. If he had been poor he might have been taken to the nearest hospital or the workhouse, or his grave, for all Miss Banks' protestations of interest and affection ; but as matters stood she knew too well on which side her bread was buttered to run any risks about dropping it, and accordingly Mr. Gayford had his two rooms set apart on the ground floor ; Niel, who received a good salary to wait upon him ; a clever cook, who had her orders to be most particular in the treatment of such delicacies as the invalid fancied ; a doctor, who came to see him as regularly as if he had been old Lady Griffin in Kensington-square, who was always fancying herself dying, but who really promised to outlive all her expectant heirs.

And further he had Miss Banks, who ran in and out, and told him the gossip of the neighbourhood and saw other people did their duty by him, keeping a watchful eye even upon the proceedings of the priceless Niel.

The doctor praised her 'devotion' ; the clergyman could not sufficiently extol her 'self-denial' ; the world—her world—professed itself unable to speak in terms sufficiently high of her 'courage and constancy.'

People said they could not imagine how she got through all she did ; and it really was wonderful ;

for, with an eye always open to the main chance, Miss Banks had seen long ago it would be profitable to allow friends to come and stay in the house occasionally ; and consequently as a rule some person was stopping there—some bird of passage, who, just alighting to rest in Kensington, went on pleased and refreshed, entertaining a higher opinion than ever of that 'wonderful woman.'

Her connection was inexhaustible ; her relations, according to her own account, as the 'sand on the seashore.' Officers from China, languid ladies just returned from India, poor dear Selina on her way to the south of France, Jessie packed off from home all in a hurry on account of her terrible infatuation for the handsome organist,—the little house at Kensington was big enough to receive them all, and Miss Banks willing to receive the 'acknowledgment,' sometimes large, sometimes but moderate, which was always offered and always accepted.

'If I were better off or had only myself, you know, dear, I wouldn't take a penny,' Miss Banks was wont to declare, with an air of proud humility that in itself was quite touching.

'Poor darling, we know how you are placed,' would be the sympathetic answer if the relative chanced to be a lady. 'I am sure we often say, we cannot think how you continue to keep up and look so cheerful as you do ; while men would reply in fewer words perhaps, but with some additional gift pressed upon the sorely-tried spinster.'

It was this lady who chanced to be what the Scotch call the 'first foot' across the threshold of Holyrood House when once the Moffats were fairly domiciled in Palace Gardens.

The butler, in an interval of

elegant leisure, thinking he would draw the dining-room blinds up a little higher, happened to be engaged in that not demeaning occupation when he beheld a carriage and pair stop at the gate; out of which, before the footman could get down, popped an active middle-sized lady wearing short petticoats, and making in her descent an unaffected display of trim boots and trim ankles. The carriage drove on, and the lady came up the drive. Very plainly dressed, possessed of no imposing presence, if it had not been for the carriage Sir John's butler might have hesitated ere confessing that Lady Moffat was at home; but taking that vision of respectability into consideration, he admitted the fact of her ladyship's being within, adding, however, as a saving clause, he thought she was engaged.

Miss Banks had gone through so many ordeals of a similar nature that, seated in the library, where he carefully shut her in, she felt she could await the result with equanimity. Lady Moffat would see her, she felt sure, and she was right.

'Will you walk this way, please?' said that 'nice superior butler,' as she spoke of him afterwards. 'Her ladyship is in the boudoir.'

It would not be too much to say that when Miss Banks entered that apartment her eyes absolutely winked with the glare, and her teeth chattered in her head as though she had come down suddenly upon a glacier.

It was a cold, cheerless, icy afternoon in February, and a bright fire burnt in the grate; but not all the fires that ever were kindled—so Miss Banks declared to Mrs. Cresson in Edward-square—could have made her ladyship's boudoir look warm.

A chilly-looking carpet, chilly-

looking curtains, armchairs upholstered in the lightest of cretonnes, a white fur hearthrug, mirrors everywhere, starved plants in great china vases, not a picture on the walls, not a book out of place on the tables, no litter of music on the piano, no work of any sort to be seen; even before the door was closed behind her Miss Banks had mastered these details, and stood surprised at the appearance of the lady she had come to see.

A woman not in the very faintest degree resembling any one Miss Banks had ever seen before in all her life, and yet vaguely reminding her of something or some one curiously familiar; a woman utterly distinct from every variety of the newly rich she had previously seen; a woman possessed of imperial beauty; in middle age more striking looking, more remarkable in appearance, more to be remembered with every accession of wealth and well-being and assured station about her than had been the case when the man, whose life since he first saw her had been a long sorrow, beheld her in the morning twilight, standing in the little garden before the poor mean house that stood, and for aught he knew still stood, in the road leading due east out of London.

'Delighted to find you have come down into our neighbourhood, Lady Moffat,' began Miss Banks, when, the first civilities having been exchanged, she found herself seated before an immense fire, with leisure and liberty to lay her first parallels. 'You have never heard of me, I dare say; but I have heard so much of you from our mutual friends the Morlings.'

'I do not know very much of them,' said her ladyship, pleased nevertheless; for the Morlings

were good people and to be desired, and she had wished to be intimate with them, only something always came in the way; that something really being that the Morlings thought Lady Moffat a detestable person, and said so.

They had made the remark, amongst others, to Miss Banks; but it answered its purpose as well in the hand of that clever lady as the most cordial praise could have done.

'Really? Well, they seemed to know a great deal about you; and so the moment I heard you were actually settled here, I asked dear Lady Griffin to drop me at your gate, as I felt I must just run in and bid you welcome. I am terribly tied at home with a poor hopeless invalid; but I trust to see you frequently. As an old resident I of course know everybody. And, O, dear, the changes I have seen even in my time! This very house, do you know, I feel it like a dream to be sitting here! The last time I ever saw poor dear Mrs. Seaton she was in the very spot where you are now, and she was talking to me about their projected tour on the Continent.'

'O, did you know Mrs. Seaton?' broke in a young voice—the voice of a girl who had been curiously introduced to Miss Banks as 'My daughter.'

'Know her? Yes, indeed I did, my dear,' said Miss Banks, turning with a sense of relief from her hostess; 'a most charming creature. Ah, a terrible story. Enough to break the hardest heart, what I have witnessed here! It is a place full of painful memories to me, yet I love it too. I assure you, Lady Moffat, it seemed to me quite like old times to be coming up to the familiar door again.'

Whatever Lady Moffat's other gifts might be, she had not that of conversation. Subsequently

Miss Banks declared she was 'too earnest' to condescend to the 'trifles' other women delighted in; and it was upon the whole rather a relief to both when Rachel, coming a little forward, took part in the talk. She was so fresh; she 'wanted to know' so many things; the Palace was so full of interest to her, she had just been reading up all about it. Papa was going to take her through it some day if he could manage to get an order. She was so deeply interested in every detail about old times, or indeed times that were not very old.

'Anything which is in the past, not in the present,' interpolated Lady Moffat.

Miss Banks feared she knew very little except about the present.

'When people got on in life,' she explained, for the benefit of all whom it might concern, 'they found so much to think of and to do that they forgot all old things, just as they laid aside old garments.'

'I think it is a very good plan,' said Lady Moffat.

'As you have been living here a long time, though,' continued the girl, 'perhaps you can tell me whether the chair the Duke of Sussex had "curtained round and covered from the air," so that he might "read and think at ease," is—'

Miss Banks shook her head; she had never even heard of it.

'Then I suppose you do not know either if the seat good Queen Caroline had placed on a mount in the Gardens is in the same place where she used to sit sheltered from the wind?'

'Good gracious, no, my dear!' cried Miss Banks, laughing. 'I daresay it was chopped up for firewood long ago.'

'You talk too much, Rachel,'

interposed Lady Moffat. 'You are wearying Miss Banks.'

Miss Banks had heard a good deal in the years of her pilgrimage; but she had never heard such a rebuke given to a girl out of her teens in the presence of a total stranger, a rebuke which, sharp though the words were that conveyed it, seemed as nothing in comparison to the tone in which Lady Moffat uttered them.

For a second she remained silent, absolutely confounded; but then she said, addressing both mother and daughter,

'I shall have to rub up my history, I see. We must go through the palace together some day, and we will try and find out about everything you want to know.'

'You had better be careful what you promise,' answered Lady Moffat; 'twelve months would not suffice to do that.'

But the girl did not make any reply. She smiled a little painfully, and sat without speaking, the brilliant colour which had mounted to her face fading away slowly, and a look of sad gravity settling down upon her features.

'A lovely young thing,' thought Miss Banks, as shortly afterwards she walked homewards, more slowly and meditatively than was her wont; 'with "forget-me-not" eyes and hair that looks as if sunbeams were always resting upon it. Not a bit like her mother.'

All the better for her, if Miss Banks had but known it—all the better by far!

'You need not sit sulking,' was the mother's amiable remark to her daughter, when Miss Banks had fairly departed. 'If you must talk, why can't you talk like other girls? I declare I often feel ashamed to hear you. Who cares for all that old rubbish about people who are dead and gone

except yourself? As you are so fond of kings and queens, why don't you show a little interest in what is going on at Court nowadays? If you did, you might get your papa to have you presented.'

'I am sorry to have vexed you, mamma,' said the girl, ignoring the latter part of this remarkable sentence.

'Sorry to have vexed you, mamma,' repeated Lady Moffat, with an attempt at mimicry which was too angry to be successful. 'You must speak in a different manner before you will make me believe that. If you can't look and talk differently, you had better go to your own room. I won't have any of your tempers shown to me.'

Her daughter rose, without haste or hesitation, but with an inexpressible grace and sweetness pervading every action.

'Do you really wish me to leave you, mamma?' she asked.

'Do I really wish I had never seen you?' retorted Lady Moffat. 'Better ask me that at once, and you will get the same answer. Yes, yes, yes! I wish you had never been born, never been reared, never grown up! Now are you satisfied?'

The girl did not answer; she only winced as if she had received a blow, and walked straight to the door without once looking at her mother with those eyes which always seemed to Lady Moffat to hold in their deep pure depths a reproach and a warning. For Rachel's eyes were exactly those of the man who, losing everything for love, found, when it was too late, he had never been beloved.

Across the great hall, up the wide staircase, the girl went slowly; she met no one by the way. Like her own heart, the

house seemed strangely lonely. She made her way to the very top landing, and entered the room she had asked for.

When she preferred her petition she scarcely thought she should ever look on Kensington Gardens with the sorrowful forebodings her heart held now. Beside one of the windows was an easy-chair; she sat down in it, and looked at the cold wintry landscape wearily, mournfully, as others before her had done, as others in the time to come must do.

She did not love her mother—it would have been folly to suppose such a thing possible; for she could never remember the time when her mother kissed and fondled her, when she comforted her infant trouble and soothed her childish griefs; but she fretted at the estrangement between them, the commencement of which was beyond her memory, and which she felt was growing wider day by day.

We yearn for love as naturally as we cling to life; and it was appalling to this lonely little soul to know for certain that, let her do what she would, she could never win affection where she had a right most to expect it.

'Why does mamma hate me so?' was a question she once, when she was little, put pitifully to her father; and Mr. Moffat—as he was then—answered,

'You must not talk so foolishly, dear; your mamma could not possibly do anything so wicked.'

But she knew now for certain her mamma did hate her really, 'would be glad perhaps if I were to die,' she thought with a shudder. 'I wonder why it is?' she went on, looking out on the strip of green which lies between the houses in Palace Gardens and the yews and thorns in Kensington. 'It cannot be anything I do now,

because it has always been the same; besides, she dislikes papa nearly as much. I know that quite well. Poor papa!'

She sat for a long time beside the window, letting her eyes wander over the strange prospect beyond, as her thoughts likewise wandered to and fro, now thinking of the mystery she could not solve, again picturing the men and women who had walked through the park beyond, busy with plots and intrigues and cares and joys and hopes and fears, and how little history ever knew or ever could tell about their inner lives.

'Rachel.'

It was her mother's voice which broke in upon her reverie.

'Yes, mamma,' and she started up obediently.

'Don't let Sir John'—Lady Moffat was so proud of the title, she often used that form of speech when it sounded not merely unnecessary, but absurd—'don't let Sir John find you moping here when he comes home. You know what he is when he finds you have been put out.'

'I will dress and come downstairs, mamma,' answered the girl, with sweet docility.

For a minute after her mother's departure she stood looking round the room his love had furnished for her with every comfort he could think of and procure. That the one large apartment might be left intact, a door of communication was made with a bedchamber adjoining, both commanding that view over Kensington Gardens which first attracted her fancy.

Everything the room contained was simple, yet rich; all her little fancies had been considered, all her tastes considered. Often it seemed to her a very haven of rest when the waters of domestic life grew rough and storm-tossed.

Disguise it as she might try to do even from herself, matters had grown much worse; life seemed more trying in Palace Gardens than had ever been the case hitherto.

The grander they became, the more money they spent, the larger the establishment they maintained, the worse grew Lady Moffat's temper. Man could not depend upon it nor woman neither. She might be calm as a glassy lake one moment, and the next furious with passion. It was an absolute impossibility to know how to avert these attacks; they were due to no apparent cause: the merest trifle, often, indeed, nothing at all, would induce an absolute paroxysm of rage.

The only thing which ever seemed to exercise the smallest restraining influence was a curious and apparently unreasoning dread of her husband. She would stop sometimes in the very middle of a sentence as if she were shot. There were times when a mere look from Sir John was able to stay the words on her lips; but on all these occasions the expression her face assumed was rather that of fear caused by some memory which her husband's glance recalled, than of dread of his reproaches.

Rachel had seen the expression often, and wondered at it. She thought of it now as she stood in the gray cold twilight, thinking of the man's kindness and patience and generosity and forbearance, which met with so poor a return.

'Such a miserable home,' she murmured; 'and we might all be so happy! Poor papa! O, poor, poor papa!'

Poor papa indeed! Spite of his great wealth and his house envied by so many, and his title envied by many more, and the

respect in which he was held, poor, poor papa!

CHAPTER XIX.

MISS BANKS' TACTICS.

It is not to be supposed that the Moffats could long inhabit their new mansion without the necessity arising for them to give a ball. Holyrood House was so manifestly a place not so much to live as to receive guests in, that, as Miss Banks truly said, there was only one thing to be done with the rooms, 'Fill them with company.'

Miss Banks' progress into intimacy had proceeded at express speed. She was always in and out; always busy in 'dear Lady Moffat's interest,' always introducing a fresh acquaintance, or heralding the approach of one. She did this good thing, however, which probably no person save herself could have managed. She toned down the glare which frightened the new order of visitor that entered Lady Moffat's boudoir and drawing-room.

Sir John and his wife had disagreed at the outset upon many of the decorations her ladyship was determined to patronise, and when paperhanger and gilder and upholsterer had amongst them accomplished a fearful work, he ventured to declare in so many words,

'I can't say I like the result; but if you do, I am satisfied.'

A remark open to doubt on the score of prudence perhaps, but not altogether unpardonable, one would have thought, considering he had to pay for embellishments he certainly regarded as mistakes.

Lady Moffat, however, was of a different opinion. She regarded the words as a gauntlet thrown

down, and lost no time in picking it up.

A very terrible quarter of an hour ensued, during the course of which Sir John said nothing, and she said a great deal.

'You admire that dingy dining-room, I suppose,' she finished, 'which is enough to give one the horrors! The idea of eating one's meals in such a gloomy dungeon! Egyptian style you call it, don't you? I could find another name which, I think, would be more appropriate.'

Then Sir John spoke.

'I do not fancy you could,' he retorted. 'Egyptian is the best style for a dining-room where there is always a skeleton at the board,' and he walked away and left her before she quite gathered his meaning.

'A skeleton!' she repeated; and the mirrors and the white enamel and the gilt mouldings and the cold, cold hangings faded from before her eyes, and there rose in their stead a phantom her husband's phrase had conjured up, and that came and stood with pitiless eyes and mocking smile before her.

Was it not Gerald Griffin—he who retired so young from the world into a monastery, and from a monastery still young into the grave—that told in mournful numbers how, when everything about and around seemed brightest and gayest,

'I pause, for the footfall of Fate in mine ear'?

It was just thus Lady Moffat paused occasionally in her craziest moments, in the midst of her wildest ebullitions of temper, as though she heard the coming of Nemesis.

She had no reason to think she was pursued, no cause to believe any step was hurrying along to overtake her own; but she knew

she had done that which people believe must surely work its own punishment; and there were times when a panic seized her that some day everything might come out, and the finger of scorn be pointed at her for the ruin she had wrought, the trust she had betrayed.

'If Miss Banks ever suspected!' she thought; for that good lady, though excessively liberal in her practice, was naturally straight-laced in her theory, and waxed very severe when she heard of any frail beauty's sins being condoned, of any escapade being forgiven.

'We are not half strict enough, we are not indeed!' she said to Lady Moffat; and Lady Moffat agreed with her, and answered,

'No, we are not.'

'A hard-and-fast line ought to be drawn,' proceeded the spinster. 'What is the use of talking to young people about virtue if we show them we are willing to receive vice?'

Lady Moffat highly approved Miss Banks' sentiments, and thought, moreover, 'we' were all very inconsistent; upon which subject she happened to be a better authority than her visitor was aware.

But if Miss Banks had known the whole story she would have 'proved loyal' to her new friend.

No fear of her deserting the occupants of Holyrood House while there was a shot in the locker or a bottle of wine in the cellar. A lady turned naked out of the Divorce Court, without a single rag of worldly prosperity left to cover her, was one person; a lady, no matter how naughty she might have been, who dressed well, and lived in a fine house, and could go and ask her husband for money, and who 'need want for nothing,' quite another.

If you think of it, reader, the same rule holds good with regard to the other sex as well.

'No one's enemy but his own' is left out in the streets, and bid 'move on' from great men's doors; while the successful rogue, clothed in purple and fine linen, is petted and courted and fawned upon.

His gilded sins are not flagrant as those of the much-besmirched wretch, who has not money enough to buy himself a dinner or pay the price of a bed.

A lame dog in the gutter and a lame dog in his lordship's kennels are two quite different specimens of canine nature. The one is drowned, the other cared for. What would you? So goes the world. If you do not like its pleasant cordial ways and confiding heart, you had better keep out of it, taking care never to want anything from its good offices; for the world is as bad as a woman—and never forgives the man who does not admire it.

Miss Banks admired Lady Moffat, or, at least, so she said, intensely. She had never seen any one, she declared, she considered so handsome and so original, so fitted to grace the society in which she moved, and yet so perfectly simple and refreshingly natural.

Lady Moffat seemed to her 'a poem.' Never in the pages of any three-volume novel had she met with so interesting a psychological study. She was as unlike every other person in mind as in appearance. Miss Banks professed herself as yet unable to sound the depths of such a nature; but hoped, as time went on, she might come to understand Lady Moffat as perfectly as she appreciated her even now.

Plenty of opportunities were afforded to Miss Banks for the prosecution of her studies. She was always at Holyrood House;

she had constituted herself Lady Moffat's friend, philosopher, and guide; and it was wonderful the docility with which her somewhat impracticable ladyship submitted herself to this control.

Miss Banks compassed her ends by flattery, not open and barefaced so much as implied. In this art she was an adept. In years of practice she had learnt every mystery of the craft—how to flatter, when to flatter, whom to flatter. Truth to tell, she scarcely ever found a person who objected to the pleasant deception, or who proved an exception to her rule—that if properly done it is safe to flatter every one.

As some men make love by looks, which are safer by far than the damning medium of pen-and-ink, so Miss Banks had a way of implying flattery that succeeded in compassing its object much better than barefaced praise. Not that her very admiration, merely indicated though it might be, was not barefaced enough; but people never found out what an insult it had all been to their understandings till, by the light of subsequent events, they read the whole story of the imposition from beginning to end.

A past master, then, in the art of making good her footing in a desirable house, Miss Banks devoted much time and much trouble to the work of cultivating Lady Moffat. She did more—she tried to mould her; tried to soften down those asperities which stood in the way of complete social success; strove to teach the alphabet in use amongst the quite new set her own energy, and Sir John's character for generous philanthropy, had gathered around Holyrood House.

If she had been working for herself (but then, indeed, she was doing that), Miss Banks declared

subsequently, she could not have done more than she did for Lady Moffat.

'I made her,' she declared at a later period. 'She could not have made her way, she could never have kept it, if it had not been for me. People in a decent rank of life never would have tolerated her *gaucheries*; not even Sir John's money and Sir John's quiet hypocrisy could have kept them from social shipwreck at their very first start if I had not taken the helm.'

There was truth in this; more truth than in most of the statements Miss Banks generally made. It required the nicest tact to steer Lady Moffat among the rocks and over the quicksands of this strange ocean, amongst the thousand little dangers which unaccustomed mariners must encounter when they venture into a society which has unspoken rules of its own, and unwritten codes of language and manner and thought, as unintelligible to people who have simply wealth, as the language, manners, and thoughts of merely rich folks are to those who have been reared from childhood in a different rank.

At a very early period of their acquaintance Miss Banks made two discoveries: viz. that whilst the devil himself could not have driven Lady Moffat, neither a child nor any one else could lead her. She would not be guided or coerced.

'She has the nature of the lowest type of criminal,' considered Miss Banks, with rare discrimination. 'It was well for her she happened to meet with a rich husband, or she would now be who can say where?'

And this was actually the case. Sir John had long before found he could do nothing with her. Anger could not tame, love failed to soften her. There was just that

want in her character, that lack in her composition, Doctor Dilton had felt long before when she would not attend to her sick husband, when he watched that evil light kindling in her eyes, and heard the hard unfeeling tone in which she spoke of an illness which aroused the sympathy and evoked the pity of total strangers.

Miss Banks was a clever woman; but even she found that Lady Moffat taxed all her resources. She could understand a rogue, perhaps from a kindred feeling; she could comprehend a fool, because she came into contact with fools every day of her life. She could moreover hazard an idea how to deal with a fiend, because she knew even the most dangerous temper generally has a vulnerable point where it can be attacked; but the combination of these three qualities, and many more beside, in one woman, and that woman gifted moreover with everything which might have made life desirable and good—health, beauty, wealth, a most admirable husband, children who did their best to please her, children straight, strong-limbed, sound in mind and body—was a phenomenon she had never yet met with.

'If I try to drive her, she will turn and rend me,' thought Miss Banks (it was the very necessity of her occupation that she should not indulge in the pleasurable weakness of a confidante, and herself had consequently to discourse with herself upon all topics of engrossing interest); 'and if I show I am guiding her she will laugh that evil laugh which I detest, and walk straight away out of leading-strings.'

A difficult position, and yet Miss Banks proved equal to it. In three months—ay, in two—Lady Moffat found she could do nothing without her. She took

Miss Banks when she went shopping; she liked to have her company when she resorted to places of amusement; she was an immense assistance when guests assembled at Holyrood House; and, in fact, if Miss Banks could have left her 'poor dear invalid,' and chosen to run the risk of being, at any instant, bundled out of doors, she might have taken up her abode in Palace Gardens, and found herself installed as chief adviser to Sir John Moffat's amiable wife.

'You have got a little corner up there,' she said one day, pointing to a most obscure portion of the icy cold-looking boudoir, 'where I think you might manage to place a small bargain I know of that would just suit you. A poor dear creature I know has to part with her china; such china! been in the family for a hundred and fifty years; the loveliest china; it is just perfection. I wish I could afford to take it at the price she would be glad to receive; for I could make money out of it. If you like china—but perhaps you don't, I have not much fancy for it myself, though I am afraid to say so to some people, because it happens to be now all the fashion: you will never meet with such a chance again.'

Lady Moffat thought she did not care much about china; but she said so in a tone which showed Miss Banks she had risen to the bait.

'Well, it certainly seems to me a craze,' went on her friend. 'Still, if you have time, I do wish you would come and see her little collection. It is far finer china than that Lady Griffin makes such a fuss over; far finer and rarer. Do you think Sir John would like to have a look at it? But I forgot; of course he has no taste for nicknacks.'

'There would be no harm in looking at the things,' conceded Lady Moffat.

'Not if you would not mind the trouble. And my friend, poor dear, is really delightful; she has long given up society—had not the means to receive any but just a few of her old intimates; and now she has lost a portion even of what she had, and these little cherished possessions that she prized beyond measure must go. She cried when she spoke to me about them, and I declare I almost felt inclined to cry myself. So I had to put on a very gruff and unfeeling manner, and say, "That is all nonsense, my dear; when you have gone through so much dreadful trouble and shed such bitter tears about important matters, surely you are not going to break your heart over a few trumpery cups and saucers."'

Broken hearts were matters quite out of Lady Moffat's line; but cups and saucers were different.

It was not long ere she thought she would like a little china, if very good indeed; then she bought it; then she brought it home herself in her own carriage; sent for a cabinet-maker, and had shelves fitted up for its reception.

'And all I can say is, my lady, if I may make so bold, that more beautiful china there is not at South Kensington,' ventured the tradesman.

'It is very good,' said Lady Moffat, as if she were a judge.

Fortune favours the bold; and Fortune played a card into Miss Banks' hand over that initiatory game of clothing the bare walls that she never could have expected.

Not a week after the little obscure corner was what Miss Banks mentally called 'made decent,' a gentleman happened to

dine with Sir John who was rich enough to have, in City parlance, bought the house and everything it contained, and Sir John and everything he owned, five times over.

A person disgustingly rich, uselessly rich, wickedly rich, outsiders who had not a sixpence to bless themselves with affirmed.

He was an enthusiast upon the subject of china: an old cracked bowl, even a bit of a plate, sufficed to send him into ecstasies. In business careful about small things, wise over pennies, particular as to the most trifling outlay, once he left his office he became a wild spendthrift; scattering his thousands and throwing away hundreds, bidding for pictures, searching for coins, hunting about for china.

He was not in the drawing-room two minutes after dinner before he began investigating for hidden treasures. He did not care for mirrors, or gilding, or white enamel, or soft luxurious carpets, or the newest ideas in chandeliers. Engravings, unless they were old, had no interest for him; the works of art in splendid bindings, that occupied prominent places of honour in Lady Moffat's rooms, he simply opened and closed. If he had not been too polite to say 'Pish!' he would have uttered that depreciatory exclamation.

Wandering into the boudoir, however, to have a closer look at the eldest daughter of the house, who struck him as a very pleasant work of nature, he happened while speaking to her about the 'colour' of some music she had been playing, a phrase which seemed perfectly unintelligible to the primitive little soul, to catch sight of the new purchase. In a moment he was beside it; in another instant his careful hands held a saucer, and his lips were uttering delight-

ed ejaculations of, 'Ay! ay! ay! ay! this is something like! this is exquisite! My dear Sir John, how I grudge you this possession! Heirlooms, I suppose—been in the family, no doubt, for ages!'

Sir John smiled quietly, and answered, stroking the hand Rachel had laid on his the while,

'Quite the contrary; my wife picked them up a bargain the other day.'

The connoisseur turned, with the saucer still in his hand.

'Now stop!' he said. 'Lady Moffat, before I hear what you gave for them, I will write you a cheque for double the amount. These are things I have been looking after for years; they are almost priceless, in fact, because they are not now to be had for love or money.'

Lady Moffat was very sorry; but neither love nor money could buy them. She had got them quite by chance, and she meant to keep them; but she said all this graciously enough. She felt pleased and flattered; and when she told the price she had paid, and the rich man declared it was nothing, simply preposterous, and offered to quadruple it, she felt more pleased still.

Through her own cleverness she thought she had secured the prize; and when she repeated the conversation to Miss Banks she totally ignored the trifling share that lady had chanced to take in the transaction. Miss Banks had her innings, however. Having ascertained the name of this wonderful millionaire, she privately got hold of him, and put many a bargain in his way, which he, unlike Lady Moffat, acknowledged, not merely with thanks, but in a substantial and gentlemanly manner. She bound him over to secrecy concerning her part in these matters, and he

entered into the pact heart and soul.

'Of course I am devoted to dear Lady Moffat, and I would do anything in the world I could to please her,' explained the astute lady; 'but I am so burdened, so awkwardly placed, and one must live, you know.'

'It is a pity you should ever die, Miss Banks,' he answered gallantly. 'You really are the most wonderful woman I ever had the pleasure of meeting.'

From this example it will be seen how Miss Banks made her way into the very heart of the Moffat citadel—improved its mistress and what she called humanised her rooms.

More china was in due time discovered, on this occasion of a style which met with universal admiration; other corners were filled up, pictures were hung on the walls, curiously carved boxes and ornaments were to be found on the tables, flowers were grouped into masses, curtains were introduced to 'keep out draughts' that toned down the glare to something endurable.

'Now if I could get those mirrors out of the panels of the doors, I should be comparatively happy,' thought Miss Banks; but it was of no use going too fast. She felt Lady Moffat's cattle were of a description that refused to be hurried. If they were hurried, they refused to go at all.

'If the ball turns out a success, I expect I shall be able to effect wonders,' said Miss Banks to her faithful confidante.

What she had already endured on the subject of the intended ball, no words can describe.

First mooted as a mere housewarming business, Miss Banks' suggestion, that it should serve not merely as a remembrance of old friends, but as recognition of

new, found favour in the sight of Lady Moffat.

'Make it a really grand affair,' advised Miss Banks; 'have something that can be talked about, and to which an invitation will be considered an honour. You have a magnificent house magnificently furnished, *carte blanche* as to money, a husband who is—shall we say?—reasonable, and *yourself*—Now with these materials not to give such a ball as has never been heard of in Palace Gardens before would be a sin, positively a sin. Think the notion over, and fill out my meagre idea as you only can; and if you believe I can help you at all, be of the very slightest assistance, only tell me how, and you know you may command me.'

CHAPTER XX.

SIR JOHN CONSIDERS.

'I DON'T know what we should have done without Miss Banks.'

It was Lady Moffat who made this complimentary remark, and it was Sir John who received it in silence.

He knew what he should have done without Miss Banks; he wished he had never seen her face: but years had taught him how much better silence was on his part than any amount of valour, and he remained judiciously dumb.

'She certainly is the very most useful person I ever met,' went on Lady Moffat, blandly patronising. 'She seems to have everything at her fingers' ends, and she knows everybody.'

'She has undoubtedly an exceptionally large number of acquaintances,' said Sir John, glad to find a point where he could conscientiously acquiesce in his wife's opinion.

'You know, my dear, she has really devoted herself to our interests in this matter.'

'So you have told me, Mira,' answered Sir John cautiously.

What could be going to happen when her ladyship addressed him as 'my dear'? What was she going to ask him? What, in a word, did she want? Time had taught this man suspicion as well as prudence. It was so rare a thing for Lady Moffat to be ordinarily civil, that he might well be pardoned the doubt that such an amazing result could only be produced by some extraordinary cause.

But Lady Moffat wanted nothing for herself. It would, indeed, have been strange if she had; for hitherto Sir John had provided her with such things as she needed, and permitted her besides to have almost unlimited power over his purse. She had but to ask, and have; but to desire, and her wish was gratified. Since her second marriage she had never known shortness of money. Sir John's liberality, if judicious, had been great, and so far the question of extravagance or of expense had never been raised between the ill-assorted pair. For these reasons, and for others, Lady Moffat wanted nothing for herself; but she thought it might be desirable if Sir John gave a present to some one else.

Still bearing this in mind, she continued:

'I have been thinking that, as she has done so much for us—given up her whole time, in fact, and employed extra help for that wretched creature, whose life must be a complete burden to himself and everybody connected with him, so that she could give herself up completely to helping me about such details as I could not possibly see after myself—you

might like to make her some little present—a brooch, or a locket, or a ring, or—or anything of that sort. She is such a grateful homely kind of body, so thankful for kindness, thinks so much of the merest trifles. She showed me a trumpery chain some friend gave her a dozen years ago—not worth half a crown, I should say—and she told me with tears in her eyes she valued it far more than if it were pearls. "It is not the worth of the gift which makes it precious," she said; "but it is the way it is given, and the person who gives it."'

Sir John sat looking at his wife in a stupor of astonishment. To hear her lisping the pleasant falsehoods current in good society, retailing the genial humbug dealt in wholesale by Miss Banks and others such as she, was fifty times more astounding than it must have sounded to hear Falstaff 'babbling of green fields' instead of sack.

What was coming? what incredible transformation was about to be wrought? Had the atmosphere of Palace Gardens performed a miracle? was the association with charming Miss Banks really going to change the spots in this leopard, to wash the skin of this Ethiop white?

'If you consider such an attention necessary and likely to prove acceptable—he began slowly, and with a natural hesitation; for though the proposal seemed to him marvellous, he did not wish by any ill-advised opposition to throw cold water on so unselfish a suggestion as that made by his wife.

'I do, I do!' she eagerly interrupted. 'And you will buy her something?'

'I was going to say,' continued Sir John—like all slow thinkers he possessed the enormous advan-

tage of remembering what he had thought—'that, if you are sure of not giving offence by offering Miss Banks a present—we are almost total strangers to her, remember, at best only acquaintances of yesterday—the gift would come with a better grace from you. I would do anything in my power to please you, Mira, as you know; but I feel I really could not ask a lady to accept jewelry, or—or anything indeed of that kind from me.'

'What do you say to a dress, then?' suggested Lady Moffat. 'Colonel Lancelough—Lady Griffin's nephew—brought her home a shawl from India; and when she was telling me about it she laughed, and said she should not be able to wear it till she could save enough out of "candle-ends" to buy a thick handsome silk.'

Sir John looked grave; he did not understand this sort of thing in the very least. He could comprehend people being very poor and requiring help—honest, honourable, worthy people, who, having had a quarrel with Fortune, had got the worst of it; who, having tried their fiercest to succeed, had only compassed failure: but Miss Banks and the class of whom she was only a representative perplexed him.

'No matter how hardly the world had gone with me,' thought this unsophisticated gentleman, 'I do not think I should like any one to offer me a suit of clothes.' And for analogous reasons the silk dress found even less favour in his eyes than the brooch had done.

Ah, he did not know Miss Banks. If he had offered to send her in a ton of coals she would have taken that ton, and many more if he liked to pay for them, in a grateful and humble spirit. She often said,

'Any one can give; but there

are few able to receive gracefully.' She could; she could receive anything, and say 'Thank you' for it. Nobody need have feared hurting her pride. As she frequently remarked, 'Thank goodness, I have not any!'

Well, well, we are told pride is a sin; but surely there must be a sort of pride that is a mere protection against degradation when it keeps people from the dirty water Miss Banks breasted like a duck: filthy slimy water, after touching which nor man nor woman could feel clean.

'I do not think either of us could offer her a dress,' Sir John said mildly. 'An Indian shawl is one thing, and so many yards of silk quite another.'

'O, just what you like,' answered Lady Moffat, with a toss of her head familiarity had long since told him was ominous.

'Just what *you* like, Mira,' he hastened to reply. 'It must be your present; I dare not take such a liberty. Tell me what you think she would fancy, and I will buy it for you; or you can get it yourself and have the bill sent in to me.'

He was 'reasonable,' as Miss Banks remarked. God knew if all his money could have purchased him peace at home, or ease of mind anywhere, he would freely have relinquished it, and begun the world again with a light heart.

A few pounds! He thought no more of giving them than many a man possessed of twice his wealth would of parting with as many shillings. He was not lavish or extravagant—simply liberal; and though he did not see the slightest necessity for the gift suggested, still, if it pleased Lady Moffat to bestow such a token, he felt more than satisfied for her to do so.

With, for her, an almost warm manner, his wife thanked him for his compliance, and begged he would select some plain and useful ornament likely to prove acceptable to so staid and matter-of-fact a lady as Miss Banks.

'Something she can wear every day,' suggested Lady Moffat, perfectly unconscious she was merely repeating Miss Banks' own words.

There are many articles a lady can wear every day; and this lady had not intended her hint to be construed so literally as to necessitate the gift being of small value.

Sir John, however, in the innocence of his heart, bought what he considered a suitable present—not a cheap one either—which Miss Banks, in the solitude of her own chamber, pronounced a 'bit of trumpery.'

She knew all about the matter of course. Knew exactly what Lady Moffat had said and her husband answered; knew Sir John would no more have thought of asking her to accept a brooch (it was a brooch) than he would have thought of flying to the moon; but, despite all this, she sat down and wrote him a pretty little note, full of thanks and regards and astonishment and deceit and hypocrisy generally.

Sir John was amazed. The note went to his office, a place where probably a woman's note, save on the plainest business, had never been delivered before; and he had to read the neatly-turned sentences twice over before he could make sure he quite grasped Miss Banks' meaning.

Then, however, he took pen and paper, and replied. If he did not comprehend Miss Banks' manoeuvres, at all events he felt there was something he did not like in this persistent attack upon himself. If his reason was at

fault, his instinct was not; and he therefore wrote instantly, disclaiming all merit in the matter, and explaining that the gift, such as it was, originated solely in Lady Moffat's desire to present Miss Banks with some slight token of regard.

'Difficult,' decided Miss Banks. 'Some City men are at first; but just let me get a ring in his nose, and then—'

Then it would be a bad time for that worthy knight's pocket, or Miss Banks meant to know the reason why.

On the evening of that same day Sir John, strolling through Kensington Gardens with Rachel, asked casually,

'Do you like Miss Banks, dear?'

'She is very pleasant, papa,' answered the girl, a little surprised at the question.

'But do you like her?' he repeated, in the mild earnest tone which had become habitual.

'I have never thought about it,' said Rachel; 'yes, I suppose I do.'

'Your attachment for her is not, however, enthusiastic apparently,' suggested Sir John.

'No; but mamma's is,' laughed the girl. 'I have never known her take such a fancy to any one before. It makes the house quite pleasant.'

'That is something in her favour, at any rate,' muttered Sir John.

'She seems very kind and good-natured,' went on Rachel—'always ready to do anything or go anywhere mamma wants; and then she knows everybody, and is never at a loss. Lady Griffin says she is the most wonderful woman she ever knew.'

'So I should imagine,' commented Sir John.

'And what I do like about her,

papa, is the way she always speaks of you ; not half highly enough, of course, but still with a kind of reverence and respect I love. I told her the other day even she had not the faintest idea how good and noble and unselfish you were ; and she said, shaking her head, " Ah, my dear, no one can know that better than I ! "

' Hush, child, hush ! ' interrupted Sir John ; and the girl stopped short, as she often did, wondering why her father could not bear to hear himself praised ; why, when she uttered some loving and tender remark, he winced as though she had touched a wound.

' I have always forgotten to ask you something, papa,' she went on after a pause. ' Was Mr. Seaton a very wicked man ? '

Sir John looked up at the interlacing branches of the trees overhead as he asked,

' How can I tell, my dear ? '

' Was he not, then ? ' she persisted.

' Why do you want to know ? ' he questioned.

' Because Miss Banks declares he was. She is always saying dreadful things about him. I asked her once what he had done, and she said *everything*. What did she mean, papa ? '

Sir John laughed outright.

' Seaton was neither more nor less than a commercial rogue, I fancy, Rachel. The best any one can say of him is that he played for high stakes and lost ; the worst, that he played with money not his own, and when he fell, pulled many people down with him. '

' Do you mean, papa, he did not do anything more sinful than that ? ' exclaimed the girl. ' I thought he must have committed some terrible crime. '

' It was a crime, my dear, ' an-

swered Sir John, his pale face flushing a little. ' He did not lose his money in honest straightforward trading. I fancy he must have known what the end would be when he took the hard-earned savings of hundreds of trusting men and women to bolster up his credit. But I don't like to judge him, ' went on Sir John ; ' it is so easy for a man to get out of the right path, so hard for him to turn back into it again ; and when once a person commences to tread the wrong road in business, or—or—in anything, it is well-nigh impossible for him to tell where he may find himself before many years are over. There is one thing I know about Seaton that I always find pleasant to think of: the day Overend's bank went—the very day he knew he himself must go into the *Gazette*—he gave a poor struggling fellow, to whom he owed some account, a cheque for the amount, bidding him go at once and get it cashed.

" Don't delay, " he said ; " in these times no one can tell what may happen, and I know the sum is of importance to you. "

' The man laughed, and answered he would as soon think of doubting the Bank of England.

" The Bank of England may find things tight to-morrow, " Mr. Seaton told him.

' Well, he started to get the cheque cashed ; but met some one or thing that prevented his reaching the bank till after four o'clock. Next morning there was what is called a *distringas* on the account ; and in the course of the day he knew Seaton's house had gone. He came to me and told me this ; and I have always thought better of Mr. Seaton, because when he was in trouble—and he must have been in such trouble then, as no one except a business man can

quite understand or sympathise with—he had a thought to spare for another who might be ruined by his fall.’

They walked on in silence for a moment; but Sir John felt the arm she held gently pressed, and knew that the simple story had gone straight from his heart to hers.

‘I am glad you have told me that, papa,’ she said at last. ‘It makes me feel more comfortable and happy; and I like to think of something else,’ she added archly; ‘of what you did when that poor man came to you and explained his grief.’

‘What do you suppose I did, Rachel?’ asked Sir John.

‘Gave him what he lost and something more,’ she answered.

‘No, dear, I did not; he would not have taken such a gift, and I could not well have afforded it; but I helped him. I lent him money which he has since honourably repaid, and I have been able also to put some business in his way. He is doing well now.’

The girl did not speak again immediately; when she did she made what seemed a somewhat irrelevant remark.

‘Miss Banks was very intimate with the Seaton.’

‘And what then?’ asked Sir John.

‘Well, I was hoping,’ said the girl, colouring, and laughing to hide her confusion at what she could not but feel to be a very

awkward speech, ‘we should not be sold up as they were. She does seem to have known so many people once very wealthy who have not now “two sixpences,” as she says, to “jingle together in their pockets.” I think I would rather live upon less at one time than be quite so poor at another.’

‘Quite right, my dear,’ said Sir John; ‘and we will so manage our affairs as to keep two sixpences in our pockets, at any rate.’

He spoke cheerfully, and they walked back in the soft evening twilight talking of other matters; yet afterwards Rachel’s words recurred to him with the meaning attached which had no doubt certainly, if unconsciously, inspired them.

Might there not be some mysterious affinity between Miss Banks and ruin, as there is between some places of business and bankruptcy?

Sir John knew quite well, so surely as a man walked into some offices he took his first step towards Basinghall-street. It was not impossible, he felt, for there to be the same sort of ill-fortune in acquaintanceship.

Given results must be produced from certain causes. Without saying anything of what was in his mind, Sir John began to look more closely into his expenditure, and to spend a considerable amount of time in the examination of his private accounts.





THE LADIES' MILE ON A JUNE MORNING.

THE LADIES' MILE ON A JUNE MORNING.

A RARE June day, a pleasant scene,
A gracious air, a sky unclouded—
How sweet those elms' new-budded green!—
The Ladies' Mile is crowded.

A gay kaleidoscopic show,
In combinations all unending,
The restless fragments come and go,
Revolving, parting, blending.

O, there are forms of Juno-mould,
And palfreys perfect in their paces,
And tresses black and brown and gold,
And proud and piquant faces.

One face, amid a hundred here,
More ripely rounded, richly tinted ;
One noble face—how soft and dear!—
Upon my heart is printed.

Sweet, in those far-off wistful eyes,
The jangling life around unheeding,
I think a pure heart-history lies,
Not difficult of reading.

I think, ere London whirl and strife
Involved you in their 'wildering mazes,
You lived a simple pastoral life
Among your birds and daisies.

I think you think you'd gladly change
Your throne above the rival beauties
For that old life's unfettered range,
Its thoughts and dreams and duties.

I think 'twere sweet to lead you back,
And watch (as London's towers should dwindle)
Your soft cheeks win the bloom they lack,
Your great eyes flash and kindle.

I think—but, see, she rides away ;
She nears the arch in canter rapid ;
She's gone : the sunshine fails the day,
The Mile is stale and vapid.

F. L.

VENTNOR AND THE UNDERCLIFF IN SUMMER AND WINTER.

FORTY years ago, where the town of Ventnor now stands, there was hardly more than a handful of fishermen's cottages, the Crab and Lobster Inn, and Steephill Castle; moreover it was a day's journey from London to the south of the Isle of Wight. Now it is all changed: a thriving town has sprung up, thanks to the recommendation of the late Sir James Clarke and the medical reputation of the late Dr. Martin; the railway has been constructed, and the service continually improved, till at length we are within four and a half hours' journey from London, with a prospect of having it yet shortened, and that speedily, when the line of rails is completed to Ryde pierhead. The old coaching inns between Ryde and Ventnor have ceased to be, while several modern hotels have been built at Ventnor with accommodation hardly sufficing for the constant succession of visitors who come day by day to the island.

It is as a mild wintering place that Ventnor has become so well known, and certainly there are no English watering-places which can compete with it in this respect. It was Sir James Clarke who, among doctors of highest rank, first wrote so highly of the climate of the Undercliff. The following are among his remarks: 'It is a matter of surprise, after having fully examined the advantages the Undercliff possessed in so eminent a degree, in point of shelter and position, that it should have been so long overlooked in a country like this, whose inhabitants dur-

ing the last century have been traversing half the globe in search of climate. Nothing along the south coast will bear comparison with it, and Torquay is the only place on the south-west coast which will do so. With a temperature nearly the same, the climate of Torquay will be found softer, more humid, and relaxing; while that of the Undercliff will prove drier, somewhat sharper, and more bracing.' Such is the opinion of one of the most eminent physicians of his day; and since then many have added their testimony to the Ventnor climate. Mr. W. Chambers of Edinburgh has written thus: 'Penzance in Cornwall and Torquay in Devon are in some way peculiarly adapted for certain complaints; but we entertain a pretty strong conviction that, for mildness united with general dryness and equability of temperature, nothing within the compass of England can surpass Ventnor in the Isle of Wight.' With regard to the winter just passed, it will readily be admitted that the cold was intense over England generally. At Ventnor invalids escaped much of the severe weather experienced elsewhere. During many days in November and December the temperature exhibited hardly one degree of diurnal variation. It is one of the most valuable climatic peculiarities of the Undercliff, that the slight fall of temperature which for an hour or two occurs at sundown is succeeded by a marked rise, which continues during the

night. It may be said with some truth that the Undercliff has but the reflection of cold in other parts of the country. For instance, the greatest amount of frost registered last winter in England was at Melton Mowbray, when thirty-five degrees were recorded one night in January; in sheltered parts of the Undercliff seven degrees of frost were registered that same night, while they had five degrees at Cannes, in the south of France. This is taking the coldest night in a cold winter as a test of the mildness of Ventnor, and these facts speak in favour of the climate. Only two degrees difference between the south of France and the Undercliff is a remarkable record worthy of consideration. People will begin to hesitate before they take long and tedious journeys to the south of France when such a sheltered nook is to be found so near at hand. In two more important points also the Undercliff seems to excel all other points on the English coast. These are, first, the great dryness of the air, not only from the small rainfall, but from the nature of the soil and subsoil, which immediately absorb and do not again permit its evaporation; and, secondly, the large amount of sunshine, which depends apparently on the clouds and fogs reaching the coast at a great height, and only descending as they touch the lofty ridge of downs which shelters the Undercliff beyond. From these important characters the climate is singularly adapted for 'rheumatics' and delicate children, as well as for *poitrinaires*. Equability of temperature, dryness of air, and ample sunshine may be accepted as the climatic specialties of Ventnor and the Undercliff. It is simply a sheltered promontory jutting out into the English Channel.

Families who have once spent a winter at Ventnor return again and again—the best test of the popularity of the Undercliff, and the benefit derived from its pure and mild sea-breezes. Of course there are two sets of visitors to the Isle of Wight quite distinct from each other—those who come to seek the benefit of a mild climate during the winter months, say from the end of October to the end of March; and the great numbers who come in the summer for holiday or change of air. It would be hard to say which set has the more agreeable time, for both seasons have their own merits.

Any one acquainted with the singular formation of the Undercliff must perceive in a moment the chief reason why Ventnor is so mild a winter resort. By a grand catastrophe of Nature an enormous landslip has taken place, and for a distance of six or eight miles a huge perpendicular barrier of rock stands sheltering the ledge or elevated plateau which has slipped down from all the force of the north and a great part of the east winds which prevail in winter. Thus the full benefit of the sunshine is obtained with only half the cutting winds which are necessarily experienced elsewhere, and which are tempered by passing over the sea.

Another cause of the equable temperature of the Undercliff is that the prevailing winds are from south to west. It is said that for nine months out of the twelve these are the usual quarters of the wind. From 1848 to 1872 a record of temperature has been published showing the difference between Ventnor and Greenwich, giving the maxima readings each summer and the minima for each winter. The Ventnor observations were supplied by J. B. Martin, Esq., corrected by those taken at

St. Lawrence by the Rev. Clifford Malden, and at the Royal National Hospital; those at Greenwich under the direction of J. Glaisher, Esq.; and the result is as follows:

Maxima in Summer.

Ventnor, 77° 2' (Fahr.) Greenwich, 88° 0'

Minima in Winter.

Ventnor, 25° 1' Greenwich, 17° 9'

This is giving the mean average for the twenty-five years. When it was desired to found a National Hospital for Consumption, a site was chosen on the Undercliff between Ventnor and St. Lawrence, because it was clearly ascertained that no place in England offered such natural advantages in climate and locality for patients suffering from that terrible disease. Since its foundation the work carried on at this hospital has been steadily increasing, and in the past year alone five hundred and eighty-one cases have been received at the institution. The result of the working of this charity must have exceeded the expectations of its founders, and if the public come forward as they ought, it cannot be doubted that a vast number of cases of incipient and arrested chest-disease may be cured as years roll by. The precise object of the Royal National Consumption Hospital cannot be too clearly stated. It has been founded for those cases which are in the early, and therefore curable, stages, or for more advanced cases in the condition of temporary arrest, which under judicious treatment may become permanent. It is not, therefore, intended for those hopelessly ill. Any would-be patient, who is fortunate enough to obtain a letter of recommendation from a subscriber, and has the certificate of two doctors that the case is fit, becomes eligible for admission to the hospital in rotation as applications are received. Once

admitted, all that the best medical skill can suggest is at hand; the nursing is of the best, the organisation and diet everything that could be desired. With these advantages of climate and nursing, it is certain that an enormous amount of good is annually accomplished at the hospital, and that a multitude of patients are sent home in a state of health which enables them to resist the insidious and ungenial changes of our English climate. Under the unfailing energy and skill of the visiting physician, Dr. Sinclair Coghill, who succeeded Dr. Hassall the founder, the institution has been eminently successful, both in its medical and financial aspects. An important point to notice is that patients are only charged ten shillings per week for everything in connection with the hospital, which, as nine cases out of ten are of the lower-middle and industrial classes, is a great consideration. This has the effect of confining its benefits to those above the pauper class. But if this benevolent scheme is to be a permanent success, private charity must continue to support the work, for the annual expenses amount to nearly 7000*l*.

No visitor to the Isle of Wight ought to leave without paying a visit to the Consumption Hospital, and surely those who have derived benefit from the climate cannot show their gratitude in a more fitting manner than by contributing to the support of an institution which prevents and alleviates this fell disease. During the last winter a small cottage home was started, with the object of receiving those incurable cases of consumption which are, from the character of the disease, beyond the scope of the National Hospital. Such cases it is proposed to take in at St. Catharine's Home,

where they will receive every care and comfort as long as they may live. It is hoped the two institutions may work together in the same manner as the Sanatorium and 'Firs Home' do at Bourne-mouth.

Independently of its claims as a health resort, Ventnor has considerable attractions in other ways. The beauty of the Bonchurch cliffs and landlip, the village of Bonchurch itself, and of the Undercliff to Niton is notorious. When the luxuriant vegetation of spring bursts forth, it has a singular beauty from its broken and diversified surface, unlike that of any other place; and there are great facilities for gaining a comprehensive idea of the surrounding scenery. Every day, as the weather becomes more summerlike, numerous four-horsed coaches start in various directions, to Black Gang, Carisbrooke, Freshwater, Alum Bay, Cowes, Newport, and Arreton. People scarcely realise that in the little Isle of Wight it is possible to drive over fifty miles in one day. The Freshwater coach starts in the morning, going by Black Gang, Freshwater, and Alum Bay, returning to Ventnor the same evening, after a round of over fifty miles. Another favourite route is by Black Gang and Carisbrooke to Newport, and home by Arreton, Godshell, and Wroxall. Carisbrooke Castle is almost too well known to need description. It is in fine preservation for a ruin—massive and picturesque. Nothing can be pleasanter on a fine summer day than a few quiet hours at Carisbrooke. The place is easily accessible, being only an easy walk (about a mile) from Newport. The visitor, therefore, who seeks a pleasant stroll and a dreamy rest may take the railway to trim

old Newport, and then ramble at leisure.

As summer advances, the yachting makes the Isle of Wight an agreeable residence.

There is an erroneous idea that Ventnor is excessively hot in summer; it is not so. The very causes which give shelter in winter also lessen the sun's power in summer. For several hours, when the days are at their longest, the sun is hidden from Ventnor by the lofty hills, and consequently the absorption of heat is less in a corresponding ratio. To make this plain: a man can walk to St. Lawrence Church on a Sunday evening along the Undercliff in perfect shelter from the sun, whereas if he had walked by the footpath on the top of the downs the sun's rays would still be powerful; the same applies to the early morning. This, together with the prevailing summer-sea-breezes from the south and west which are never failing, is the reason why on an average of twenty-five years the maxima readings of heat are ten degrees less than at Greenwich.

Mr. E. Miall, the well-known editor of the *Nonconformist*, has written the following humorous paragraph on Ventnor as a summer resort: 'Ventnor, being a well-known winter retreat for invalids suffering from pulmonary affections, is popularly set down as intolerably hot throughout the summer months. For ourselves, we suffered nothing whatever—no oppression, no feverishness, no melting down of bodily substance and strength, no longing to sit, as Sydney Smith has expressed it, "in our naked bones." The balminess of the air was exquisitely luxurious by night as well as by day, and every breath which the lungs inspired diffused a sense of positive enjoyment through the

nervous system. The current opinion about the climate of Ventnor we take to be all moonshine. It may not possess all the bracing qualities of the Eastern coasts; but as to its reputed oppressiveness, we believe it is to be found rather in the imagination of those who have never tried it, than in the experience of those who have. Ventnor is a most agreeable resort for overworked and jaded citizens—sober, honest, quiet, and respectable, with more than the usual amount of natural attractions, and less than the usual deductions on the score of local habits, customs, and character.'

The early spring is the time when Ventnor is liable to an unpleasant taste of the east winds, but is there any place in Europe where you can entirely escape east wind? Sea-bathing is now excellent at Ventnor, thanks to the exertions of the local board. Some years ago it was difficult to bathe at all on account of the rocks which covered the beach. To remedy this a series of wooden groins have been placed at intervals along the shore, and the result is that the accumulation of fine shingle has completely covered the rocks, making the bathing all that can be desired. Those who swim can get into deep water directly, but on the other hand there is little or no danger for non-swimmers; cases of accident to bathers are almost unknown at Ventnor.

There are several good libraries in the town worked in connection with Mudie's, where a constant supply of books may be obtained. For those who require the very newest books at short notice, Smith's stall at the railway station is at hand. There is also a capital and very centrally situated club, the *entrée* of which is generally facilitated to visitors.

From the naturalist's point

of view the Isle of Wight is simply unrivalled. Take natural science in any of its branches. If a botanist wishes to study the flora he will find ample materials at hand; there are seven hundred plants indigenous to the island, and several species which can hardly be obtained elsewhere. A ramble through woods and hedgerows on the slopes of the chalk downs will always repay the trouble of a climb. Eleven kinds of the Orchidaceæ alone are found in the neighbourhood of Ventnor: *O. morio*, *O. mascula*, *O. maculata*, *O. latifolia*, *O. ustulata*, the Bird's Nest orchis and Twayblade; Fly, Bee, and Butterfly, and the sweet-scented orchis. This is a large list for any one locality. Many other rare plants may be found along the Undercliff; as, for instance, the great sea-stock, which grows undoubtedly wild in out-of-the-way places on the cliffs. In Bonchurch landslip the writer has gathered as many as seventy species of plants in a single morning, and there are woods within a mile of Ventnor a very paradise to botanists. Lichens also flourish in the island. It is not uncommon to see the roof of a cottage or barn covered with such growth—yellow, brown, or orange, according to the different species. Many of the thorn-trees between Ventnor and Niton have their growth almost choked by the lichen, and large masses of stone are hidden by it. To the lover of ferns it is not so easy to speak, for many species have been fairly exterminated. *Asplenium adiantum nigrum* grows freely in some places, and the uncommon moonwort is found in the landslip in the crevices of old walls and rocks. The Adder's Tongue grows near Luccombe Copse, and *Osmunda Regalis* in marshes near Black Gang. The

Marsh *Lastrea* is also found in one spot near Godshill; and the commoner ferns in any wood, or by the side of streams.

From the terrestrial flora it is an easy transit to plants which dwell in the sea, or attached to rocks between tide-marks. With the exception of the Channel Islands, and possibly Tenby, there are few localities so famous for marine algæ as the Isle of Wight. The *Zostera*, or sea-grass, is plentiful in the extreme low-tide zone, and one hundred and forty species of sea-weeds may be found on the coast between Sandown and Niton. Doubtless many readers will be familiar with the splendid rose-coloured *Delessaria sanguinum*, which has such clearly ribbed, broad, and transparent fronds. What a perfect picture such a plant presents as it grows in the tidal pools among a dozen variously-tinted algæ, with the variety of a miniature and fairy-like forest! What can be more invigorating than a scramble among these tidal pools in search of sea-weeds or zoophytes! Each species of weed which grows in the sea is the home of some tiny zoophyte or other, and by the aid of a pocket-lens or microscope a new world is revealed to the uninitiated. Such microscopic life presents a vast field of study in itself, as the splendid works of Dr. Johnston, the Rev. J. Hincks, and many others show. The lover of Nature who has once had the good fortune to see a delicately-organised zoophyte, such as the *Campanularia*, is drawn to the study of marine life with a feeling of reverence for the mighty power which has created such intricate organisms. Sea-anemones are easily obtained off Bonchurch or Luccombe. The flower-like *Crassicornis* is to be found by the careful searcher, but the writer has never yet seen any two

specimens like one another—from every tint, slate, brown, white, orange, &c., yet never two alike.

Many strange creatures are found inhabiting the tidal pools. The aphrodite, or sea-mouse, which buries itself under stones or weed, is perhaps of rare occurrence; it is more like a fat slug than a mouse, the beauty consisting in the iridescent bristles which cover the back, and shine in the sun with all the brilliance of a rainbow. There is the curious mollusc, called the chiton, which has a shell divided into eight plates, so that it can curl itself up in the same manner as the woodlice which infest our gardens. Underneath stones the brittle sand-stars hide themselves. With a strong lens we may see the remarkable processes called ambulacral organs, which are pushed in and out with great rapidity for locomotive purposes as long as the creature is alive. In dense masses of sea-weed the sea-spiders lurk, lying so close that it is no easy matter to find them; nevertheless there are plenty at low-water mark. Many of the nudibranchiate family are common on the Ventnor beach,—curious tribe of brilliant-coloured molluscs which only possess a shell when in the young state; as soon as they arrive at maturity the shell is cast off, and external gills are developed. They swim in the water, crawl on the rocks, and twist themselves into such a variety of shapes that it puzzles the inexperienced to find the true classification. But it would take pages to enumerate the great variety of marine life to be caught in these tidal pools. What with sea-weeds, zoophytes, and other marine fauna, there is endless source of amusement open to the student of natural science, the one branch leading on to the

other, until it is hard to know where to pause in following the vast and endless chain of life.

Geologically Ventnor is an admirable centre for the study of the lower cretaceous system of rocks. It is ground rendered classic to the geologist by the writings of the late Dr. Mantell. It is owing, indeed, to geological accident that we possess the picturesque Undercliff. At the base of the green sands lies a bed of soft blue clay, locally known as 'blue slipper,' which is the cause of all the landlips in the locality. It is the same material as the Folkestone cliffs are composed of. After any weight of rain has permeated through the green sands to this blue clay, the whole foundation becomes insecure and the superincumbent strata are liable to slip away into the sea; so that unless precautions are taken to secure the base of the cliffs with groins, &c., further serious landlips may be looked for in the south of the Isle of Wight. The fact is very evident that all the topographical beauties of the Bonchurch landlip and the sheltered position of the Undercliff generally are due to the slippery nature of the blue gault.

Beautiful collections of fossils may be formed from the Ventnor beach and the various quarries in the neighbourhood, which are being continually excavated for building purposes. At Brook, about fifteen miles by the coast from Ventnor, the remains of a fossil forest are visible at extreme low water, though nothing like the wonderful remains of that kind at Cromer in Norfolk.

For all branches of natural science, whether for birds, butterflies, flowers, or geological research, the Isle of Wight is the perfection of exploring ground, where one

may search with the certainty of success. A man with a handy little cutter and a dredge might catch enough creatures round the island to stock even the Brighton Aquarium. For gentlemen with a taste for hunting, there is a pack of hounds handy several days in the week during the winter, and excellent mounts are to be had in Ventnor. We do not suppose the country is exactly overrun with foxes, yet there are usually fair runs, and it is very rarely a meet is interrupted through severe frosts. On the terrace above the Cove—the most charming and sheltered position in Ventnor—stands the spacious and well-conducted Marine Hotel. In one wing of this building is domiciled the Castle Club, supported by the neighbouring landed and professional gentlemen. The rooms are well supplied with the best daily and weekly newspapers, magazines, and reviews. On the introduction of two members, and payment of a moderate fee, visitors may obtain admission during their residence. There is also an asphalt rink which has been turned into a tennis-court, in a position so sheltered that there are few days in the winter when it is not possible to play. A new public hall has been recently opened at Ventnor, where dramatic and musical entertainments are frequently given. Last winter a series of theatrical performances were got up by the Ventnor Entertainment Club, which have been highly successful, and which it is intended to repeat each season. Owing to the hilly nature of the country it is trying to invalids to walk much about Ventnor; but there are a great number of saddled donkeys and pony-chairs always available, by means of which it is easy to get fresh air and necessary exercise without exertion. It would be of great public advantage if the

local authorities would frame a uniform scale of charges for the hire of carriages and other locomotive means in Ventnor. Recreation gardens have lately been acquired by the town on the Ham-borough estate, and have been laid out and planted, chiefly owing to the generosity of Sir Lawrence Peel, who has given all the trees and shrubs necessary, and whose name is a sufficient guarantee that the gardens will be skilfully finished. It was the same benevolent gentleman who laid out and gave all the plants and trees for the gardens of the National Consumption Hospital; he also designed the gardens of the Middle Temple in London. Many semi-tropical plants might be acclimatised on the Undercliff; in one or two gardens the bamboo and eucalyptus have been growing for years in the open air, and where the bamboo will grow or survive the winter, surely many other plants might be introduced. A close observation of the trees and flowers of Ventnor affords further proof of the mildness of climate; for most plants are in leaf or flower fully three weeks before the time specified in botanical works, while the geranium, cornella, myrtle, passion flower, and many other exotics flourish in the open shelter of the verandahs. The arbutus, which fruits freely and regularly, flourishes everywhere, and attains quite the growth of a forest tree.

It is curious that steamers should not call at Ventnor pier. In summer there are constant excursions round the island; also at intervals to Brighton, Bournemouth, and other places. It would be a great convenience if people could reach these vessels from Ventnor pier instead of being obliged to go by train to Ryde. It is a sixty miles' sail round the

island, fast steamers accomplishing the distance in four hours, wind and weather permitting. The *Heather Bell* is quite a well-known steamer for such excursions; she was originally destined for the Clyde service by the Duke of Hamilton, and has all the fittings of a private yacht, besides being a seaworthy boat. It is generally rough on one side the island, and excursionists come back at times most pitiable objects after the four hours' sail. In winter, of course, there are no such trips.

There are a great number of excursions to be made in the neighbourhood of Ventnor. Leaving the town by the high-road westward, the pedestrian passes Steephill Castle, where the Empress of Austria resided for three months in the summer of 1874. Immediately after passing the castle a footpath leads down to the sea on the left hand, returning to Ventnor by the cliff, being a distance of two miles. Continuing from Steephill along the road we reach the Consumption Hospital, beyond which a second path leads through Bank End Farm to the sea. At St. Lawrence a foot-road on the right leads through the Pelham Woods to the downs and back to Ventnor, about a three-mile walk; or it may be followed westward to Niton, or even to Black Gang. St. Lawrence Church was said to be the smallest in England till some additions were made to the chancel, which made it capable of holding thirty worshipers! In summer the clergyman was in the habit of preaching out of the window while the people sat in the churchyard. A new church has now been built. On the left of St. Lawrence lies the hamlet of Woolverton, near which old British and Roman remains have been found. There are some ivy-clad ruins here, said

to have been an old abbey, but are really those of the old manor-house named in Doomaday Book. A steep footpath beyond the Whitwell Hill, called St. Rhadagund's Path, leads up the face of the cliff to the village of Whitwell, which has a church with Norman work about it. It is really a twin church, with separate dedication to the Virgin and St. Rhadagund. About three miles from Ventnor a path leads up the cliff called the Cripple Path to the downs above; by following this route we reach Niton, where there is a charming old inn called the Sandrock Hotel, a favourite resort of Dr. Arnold of Rugby, and the very place for any one to lunch before returning to Ventnor, which is five miles off. The visitor of mechanical proclivities may at this point enjoy himself by strolling down in the direction of the old Buddle Inn, and Crab Niton. This leads to St. Catherine's lighthouse, one of the stations possessing Professor Tyndall's fog-horn (the Syren). The beautiful machinery for producing this powerful sound blast when the rays of the lighthouse lamp cannot penetrate a fog is a scientific curiosity well worthy of inspection. Starting from Ventnoreastwards, the pedestrian passes the picturesque valley of Bonchurch. The little church, dating from the eighth century, lies between the village and the sea; the gate is kept locked, but visitors can always obtain admission from the sexton in charge, who is in constant attendance. In this churchyard lie the remains of the Rev. John Adams, author of *The Shadow of the Cross*, and of John Sterling, whom Carlyle by his *Life* made so famous. Bonchurch is a curious, nestling place. It takes a visitor some time to realise amongst the winding paths of upper and lower Bonchurch, and the cliff

which rises between it and the sea, how many pretty houses and beautiful gardens are strewn about. Mr. Richard Pope's charming mansion and property of Westfield, although numbering some sixteen acres, is so shut in from the outer world that it cannot at first be discovered.

The footroad continues from Bonchurch through the famous Wroxall, walking home through Godshill Park, and the villages of Godshill, Whitwell, and Niton, landslip to Luccombe Chine, which is half-way to Shanklin. At this point we pass the beautiful secluded properties of Mr. Frere and Mrs. Francis, each full of charming artistic points where the sequestered woody dell slopes down to the sea. It is a steep pull up Luccombe Chine (the delicate beauty of which repays the pedestrian), but this may be avoided by walking along the shore for a few minutes towards Ventnor, when a path will be found leading up again into the landslip by an ascent much easier than Luccombe Chine. From Luccombe to Shanklin it is a pleasant walk on the sands; but care must be taken to ascertain that the tide is going out, otherwise it is impossible to get round Dunnoe Point, where the cliff is perpendicular and the tide runs in very fast. When people are cut off at this point there is nothing for it but to retrace their steps as far as Luccombe. There is but one carriage-road directly inland from Ventnor, zigzagging up the chalk downs, through the village of Wroxall to Newport and other parts of the island. It is a grand walk or ride along the ridge of these chalk downs, the view from some points being very extensive, embracing the Needles and Freshwater Cliff, Culver Point, the Solent, and the mainland beyond.

LOVE AND WAR.*

By R. MOUNTENEY JEPHSON,

AUTHOR OF 'TOM BULLKLEY OF LISSINGTON,' 'A PINK WEDDING,' ETC.

CHAPTER VIII.

I SHALL not ask you, reader, to Mr. Buddlecombe's dinner. In the first place, you have had, I should think, enough of it in anticipation. In the second, the action of the story is in abeyance throughout the whole of the dinner scene. I will, therefore, after leaving to your lively imagination the astonishment of Mrs. Buddlecombe and old Bolitho when the Mayor ushered in Algeron Warriner, resume the narrative at that point where Mr. Buddlecombe, eager to hear the wonderful scheme and then get rid of his guest, hurried him back to the study soon after the ladies had left the table, much to the convivial old Bolitho's dissatisfaction.

'I was very pleased with the way in which Florence conducted herself,' mentally remarked Mr. Buddlecombe, as he took his seat, after having motioned Warriner to a chair on the other side of the study-table. 'There was an unmistakable air of utter indifference to this young man, which must have been inexpressibly galling to a conceited young military coxcomb. I'm on the tenter-hooks of expectation about this scheme.'

'What a hurry the old boy is in!' simultaneously mused Warriner, as he took *his* seat. 'I hadn't half punished that port of

his. Florry looked lovelier than ever.'

'Now, sir,' said Mr. Buddlecombe, having settled himself comfortably, 'I hope you will be good enough to divulge the object of your visit to me this evening with a little more expedition than you observed before dinner. Brevity, allow me to remind you, sir, is the soul of business as well as of wit.'

'Certainly, sir. I am now in a better position to be brief than before partaking of your hospitality.'

'That means,' thought the Mayor, highly pleased at what he imagined was a covert allusion to his exalted position—'that means he was awed by my bearing before dinner, but that my port after dinner has given him courage. Now, sir,' he added aloud, 'I await your communication.'

'I can state it to you in a very few words.'

'So much the better,' said Mr. Buddlecombe, leaning forward in his chair, eagerly listening.

'I shall go straight to the point,' said Warriner. 'You have, sir—'

At this most interesting moment the door was boisterously flung open, and old Bolitho entered in a state of considerable hilarity.

'Bother! Bolitho's the plague of my life,' growled Mr. Buddlecombe, striking his knee with his clenched fist.

'Here I am, you see,' said old

* The author reserves to himself the right of dramatising this story, or any portion of it.

Bolitho rather unnecessarily. 'To make use of a nautical phrase, I slipped my cable and gave chase.'

'To judge from his flushed countenance,' snarled Mr. Buddlecombe aside, 'I should say "hard a-port" would be the nautical phrase to express what Bolitho's been up to.'

'I guessed your little game all of a sudden, Buddle, my boy,' said the hearty but somewhat obtrusive old gentleman. 'Ah, conquering hero,' he added, turning his beaming and rubicund old countenance full on Warriner, 'it has afforded me the keenest gratification to see you a guest of my old friend. Now that we are untrammelled by the presence of the ladies or the etiquette of the dinner-table, allow me to shake your hand once more. Are you quite sure now it doesn't hurt your wounded arm?'

'No, no; not in the least,' said Warriner, with a careless laugh.

'Then what does he carry it in a sling for, if it's all right?' growled Mr. Buddlecombe aside.

'Ah, I heard all about it from your fellows,' said old Bolitho, regarding the young soldier with a kindling eye and still retaining his hand; 'how you wouldn't leave the ground, though you were badly hit.'

'Nothing so very wonderful in that,' muttered Mr. Buddlecombe, surveying the other two with a jaundiced eye. 'I didn't leave the ground when I was badly hit in my memorable fight with Bolitho. In fact, I was particularly adhesive to the ground.'

This reminiscence of boyhood was strictly true; for Puddleton's Mayor in embryo was, on the occasion alluded to, perfectly aware of that clause in the pugilistic code forbidding active hostilities as long as one of the combatants is down.

'Yes; and how you carried a message through a murderous fire from one brigadier to another after two aides-de-camp and an orderly officer had been killed or seriously wounded in the attempt,' continued Mr. Bolitho, giving Warriner's hand another hearty wring.

'O nonsense, Mr. Bolitho!' said the young man, in a serio-comic vein. 'These things don't bear talking about. A soldier's motto is "Deeds, not words."'

'Of course not words from those who have performed the deeds; but others may speak about them; ay, and speak too in trumpet-tongued tones!' said old Bolitho, finishing up with a roar, just to illustrate how, in his opinion, valour should be celebrated.

'Bolitho,' said Mr. Buddlecombe, who was fretting and fuming to resume the *tête-à-tête* with Warriner, 'as you don't appear to have anything important to communicate, I think it just as well to remind you that you are interrupting a private conversation of a somewhat pressing nature.'

'O, don't mind me,' replied the irrepressible old gentleman. 'Besides, I know quite well what you've got to say. You hadn't left me alone two minutes with the wine, Buddle, when the subject of your little private conversation occurred to me, and so I took the liberty—'

'Don't mention it,' said Mr. Buddlecombe, catching his friend up short. 'When you *don't* take a liberty, Bolitho, *then* the circumstance *may* be worth recording amongst the phenomena of the age.'

'Well, well,' returned old Bolitho, whose good-nature was proof against the shafts of sarcasm, 'I knew I should make no difference, for, Buddle, we were boys together.'

'I know we were ; but, Bolitho, it doesn't follow that we are, therefore, to be Siamese twins together,' testily retorted Mr. Buddlecombe. 'O, do you know,' he muttered, as he took a turn towards the window, just by way of calming his excited feelings a little, 'my advice to any one beginning life is, don't be a boy ; at least, don't be a boy together with another boy, or you'll live to repent it all your days.'

'Yes, I guessed what it was you had to say to our mutual friend,' said the pachydermatous old Bolitho, following his friend and speaking confidentially ; 'you wanted to tell him that a change had come o'er the spirit of your dream. You wanted to make the *amende honorable* in a neat little speech about retracting your previous bad opinion of his profession. By the living Jingo, Warriner, my boy, I was never so surprised in my life as when I saw you come into the drawing-room the guest of my old friend ! Any one might have knocked me down with a feather.'

'What an opportunity I lost !' growled Mr. Buddlecombe. 'I'd have expended the contents of my last pillow in the cause.'

'I am sure,' said Warriner, with excessive politeness, 'that a profound sense of gratification would permeate through all ranks of the British army could they only know how they have risen in the estimation of the worshipful Mayor of Puddleton.'

'Does he mean that now for impudence or not ?' mentally reasoned Mr. Buddlecombe. 'Impudence, I should think. I'll confront impudence with dignity.'

With this intention Mr. Buddlecombe assumed an attitude much affected by old gentlemen when standing on their dignity—that is to say, he pulled up his

shirt-collar with one hand, placed the thumb of the other in the nearer arm-hole of his waistcoat, planted one foot at about right angles to the other, and then, after clearing his throat, commenced with overwhelming pomposity,

'Sir, the honour you confer—'

'Ha, ha, ha ! fancy old Buddle a sort of military idol !' roared Mr. Bolitho, at the same time administering a poke in the ribs which curled up the dignified attitude with a completeness that brought knees and nose into pretty close proximity, besides communicating a spasmodic movement of a horn-pipant nature to the feet of the victim.

'If I killed Bolitho some day surely it would come under the head of justifiable homicide,' was the nice little point of criminal law which for a few moments agitated Mr. Buddlecombe's magisterial mind. 'Bolitho,' he remarked, as soon as he had recovered himself a little, 'you are utterly wrong, as you generally are, in your conjectures. The business between this gentleman and myself is of so private a nature as to necessitate a temporary separation even between two who have been "boys together." You will oblige me, Bolitho, by leaving us alone for a short time.'

'Of course, Buddle, old boy, if you really wish it. Don't stand on ceremony with me. I don't wish you ;' this last statement being fully illustrated by a slap on the back.

'I know you don't,' said Mr. Buddlecombe sharply. 'I wish you did. But there's as much chance of your standing on ceremony as there is of your standing on your head ; and that being the lightest part of your system, in fact, nothing but froth, will naturally always be at the top.'

At this personal sally old Boli-

tho laughed until the tears ran down his fat red cheeks.

'Now what are you to do with a delicate little sensitive plant like that?' groaned Mr. Buddlecombe. 'How can you guard your language so as not to offend this shrinking little *mimosa pudica*?'

'Quite right, Buddle, quite right,' said old Bolitho, wiping his eyes. 'I'm neither a master of ceremonies nor an acrobat, so I neither stand on ceremony nor my head. Ha, ha, ha! But as you really wish it, I'll leave you and go and join the ladies. See you again, Warriner, my boy. One more shake of the hand. By Jove, I can't look at you, after what your brother-officers have told me, without picturing the whole thing. The shots fly like hail. Bang, bang! go the guns. "Forward!" is the cry. Bang, bang! more guns—'

'Bolitho, I object to spirited imitations of big guns in my house. The only imitation of a gun you can oblige me with will be by going off,' and Mr. Buddlecombe pointed to the door.

'All right, Buddle,' said old Bolitho. 'Don't make a stranger of me. Bang! I'm off,' and off he was, gaily humming the 'British Grenadiers' as he went.

His departure was a relief to Warriner, as well as to the Mayor; for now, having fulfilled the condition on which Mrs. Buddlecombe's support had been promised, there was no longer that object in delay which had existed before the stipulated invitation to dinner had been wrung from the unwilling host. On the contrary, delays and interruptions were now as undesirable as, before dinner, they had been the reverse, inasmuch as they were calculated to work Mr. Buddlecombe's excitable temperament into a dangerously combustible condition, in which a

fearful explosion might result on the coming disclosure.

'Now, sir,' said Mr. Buddlecombe, as he resumed his seat on old Bolitho's departure, 'now for this wonderful revelation of yours.'

'Not wonderful, sir, in the least,' replied Warriner, who thought it prudent to let the old gentleman calm down a little after the recent interruption before going straight to the point. 'I assure you, sir, it is, like many apparently abstruse matters, very simple when you know all about it.'

'Well, sir, we are now secure from further interruption; let us "know all about it."'

The Mayor's tone and manner—for his last four words were pronounced in a snappish imitation of Warriner's—warned the latter that he had better go on at once, and he had just commenced, 'You are blessed, sir, with—' when again was the door opened, and Spigot entered.

'I beg your worship's pardon; I thought your worship had joined the ladies,' apologised the obsequious menial.

Now who ever knew a servant, least of all a butler, enter an occupied room by mistake that he did not, before retiring, perform some little service, just to show the readiness with which he could adapt himself to unforeseen circumstances, and also his unflagging attention to the *minutiae* of his office? It is generally the fire that comes in for a little ostentatious attention. In this case, however, it being summer, there was no fire; so Spigot, moth-like, made for the light, and, unconscious of the ferocious scowl fixed upon him, proceeded to regulate the moderator-lamp.

'Spigot, if you don't retire this moment,' said Mr. Buddlecombe fiercely, 'you'll find yourself tak-

ing the title-*rôle* of a one-act tragedy, entitled the *Butler on his Beam-ends; or the Intruder injured for Life*. Do you hear me?

'Certainly, your worship;' and Spigot hurriedly shuffled out of the room, murmuring as soon as he got outside, 'Bless me, he goes off like a champagne cork!'

'Now, sir, once more, please,' said Mr. Buddlecombe, not in the most angelic of tempers. 'Not another interruption shall I brook. Out with this communication of yours, sir, which is to save me the large sum mentioned in your note.'

With this he leaned forward in his chair, and anxiously awaited Warriner's reply.

'You have, sir, a charming and accomplished daughter—'

'Sir,' said Mr. Buddlecombe, with frigid *hauteur*, 'to the author of her being, who has had every opportunity of observing those charms and of paying for those accomplishments, your remark is totally devoid of novelty.'

'To that daughter, sir,' continued Warriner firmly, but politely, 'I have heard, on the best authority, that you give a marriage portion of thirty thousand pounds. Is not that the case?'

Mr. Buddlecombe rose from his chair in fierce wrath.

'Yes, sir, I do!' he spluttered. 'And what of that, sir? What if I do? What the deuce is it to you?'

'Why, sir,' returned Warriner coolly, but courteously, 'I'll take her with nothing, and be proud and delighted to do so. You will thus readily perceive how a saving of thirty thousand pounds will accrue to yourself. That, sir, is the—'

'Get out of my sight!' gasped Mr. Buddlecombe, who, for some moments, had been speechless

with rage. 'Go away, or I shall have a fit! I—I'll give instant orders to have you tarred and feathered!'

As the worshipful gentleman uttered this fearful threat, he staggered to the mantelpiece, rang a furious peal on the bell, and then sank back into an armchair, evincing every symptom of an approaching apoplectic fit. He had now all but lost the power of speech, and could only, as he wildly gesticulated with his arms and rolled his head from side to side, faintly articulate, 'Get out of my sight! Go away!'

'For goodness' sake calm yourself, sir,' said Warriner, who was greatly alarmed. But he might just as effectually have addressed that remark to the winds and the waves in the midst of a typhoon, and the very tones of his voice produced a perceptible exacerbation of the apoplectic symptoms. 'I really did not expect quite such an effect as this,' he thought. 'My presence seems to exasperate him beyond all bounds. I shall never forgive myself if the consequences are serious. I shall retire for the present by the shortest route.'

Carrying this decision at once into effect, Warriner stepped through the French window, which was partly open, and disappeared in the darkness outside. He had scarcely made good his retreat, when Mrs. Buddlecombe, Florence, and old Bolitho, followed by Spigot and a few other servants, rushed into the room in response to the loud peals of the bell which had sounded the alarm throughout the house.

'O darling papa, what is the matter?' cried Florence, rushing terror-stricken to her father, and taking one of his hands in both hers.

'Joshua, my own Joshua, speak to me!' screamed Mrs. Buddle-

combe, as she seized his other hand, knelt by his side, and looked imploringly up into his face.

But Mr. Buddlecombe spoke not; he only rolled his eyes, and breathed stertorously.

'O Joshua, Joshua!' sobbed Mrs. Buddlecombe, 'I've often told you how it would be some day. How I *have* begged and prayed of you to curb that excitable temperament of yours, especially after a meal! But you would never take my advice.'

Now,

'Sadder than owl-songs or the midnight blast;

Of all the horrid hideous notes of woe
Uttered by friends, those prophets of the past,

Is that portentous phrase, "I told you so."

It is also just about the most exasperating remark that can be made to any one troubled in mind or in body. It may, therefore, appear that Mrs. Buddlecombe rubbed the sore when she should have brought the plaster, as honest old Gonzalo would have expressed it. However, rubbing the sore was just the very best thing the good lady could have done. There is not the slightest doubt that, on the homœopathic principle of like curing like, it saved Mr. Buddlecombe from apoplexy. A rage all but produced the disease; another rage averted it. He at once found his tongue, though at first it was with difficulty that he used it.

"O woman! in our hours of ease," he observed feebly, but with an ominous glare in his eye, "Uncertain, coy, and hard to please; When pain and anguish wring the brow," your invariable remark is, "I told you so, but you wouldn't take my advice."

With this last outrage on Sir Walter Scott, Mr. Buddlecombe was himself again. He jumped up from his chair, and with fearful

volubility poured forth the pent-up torrents of his wrath:

'O Georgina, it's positively maddening! It doesn't matter whether you've caught a cold in the head, or dropped ten thousand pounds in railway shares, or slipped upon a bit of orange-peel, or murdered your mother-in-law, or carried away a button, or tumbled off the top of the Monument, it's always the same with a woman, "I told you so, but you wouldn't take my advice." Did you tell me, Georgina, that I was going to be made a fool of by that young puppy? Did you apprise me of the fact that I was about to be turned inside out, upside down, backwards and forwards, round and round, by that one-armed, double-faced young jackanapes?

'Why, what has he done?

'Done? Done *me*! Why, he's obtained a dinner from me under false pretences, and then made a fool of me, coupled with a gross insult towards a member of my family.'

'I don't believe it; there's been some misunderstanding,' said Florence to herself. 'O dear, where is he?'

'Here, close that window, Spigot, and draw the curtains,' said Mr. Buddlecombe. 'Come along, follow me, you servants; and if we find him in the grounds, I'll have him tarred and feathered and then set on fire in the water-butt down at the stables;' and Mr. Buddlecombe bustled out of the room, followed by Spigot and the rest of the servants.

'O, what *can* Algy have said or done, and what *has* become of him?' thought poor Florence, as she clasped her hands together.

'It will never do for Joshua to be left to his own devices in this excited state,' said Mrs. Buddlecombe. 'He doesn't know what

he's saying. Tarred and feathered and set on fire in the water-butt, indeed! I'll follow him;' and Mrs. Buddlecombe hurriedly left the room.

CHAPTER IX.

FLORENCE was about to follow her mother, when old Bolitho placed his hand gently on her shoulder and detained her.

'Stay, Florry; your father is all right now. He has regained his normal condition of fluster, and you had better leave him to your mother. It's a queer piece of business, isn't it? But I don't believe for one moment young Warriner has done or said anything wrong.'

'Neither do I.'

'I wish he had not beaten such a rapid retreat, though. However, I won't believe any harm of him. I never came across a young fellow I liked and admired so much in every way.'

'What a darling old pet old Mr. Bolitho is!' thought Florence.

'I tell you what it is,' said Mr. Bolitho, addressing an imaginary audience rather than Florence, 'if I had a daughter I'd—I'd—hang it! I'd ram her down his throat as a reward for valour!'

Notwithstanding her distress of mind, Florence found it impossible to repress a laugh; but old Mr. Bolitho looked quite serious, a wonderful phenomenon that at once attracted her attention.

'What's the matter, Mr. Bolitho?'

'Well, since you've noticed a change in my manner, I'll tell you what's the matter. I must say, Florence, that during all these years I have known you, ever since you were a baby with a mistaken notion that your duty

towards your godfather was to gouge his eyes out, I do not recollect one single act of yours which was anything but pleasing in those organs, not even your infantile efforts to deprive me of them.'

'Then I have incurred your displeasure this very evening? O, what is it, Mr. Bolitho?' asked Florence eagerly. 'Can I,' she asked herself, turning her face away to hide the blushes with which the very thought suffused her fair cheeks, 'O, can I unconsciously during the dinner have betrayed my love for Algy?'

'Yes, Florry, I am sorry to say that this very evening your conduct occasioned me some pain and, I may add, annoyance.'

'Occasioned you pain and annoyance, Mr. Bolitho? *You*, who have always been a second father to me? O, you know I would not do so willingly!'

'I do not like to see, Florry, in one so young such coldness, such marble-like indifference in a case where any one would suppose youthful interest, and at all events a passing sympathy, would be most readily awakened. That gallant young fellow, Florry, with the tacit but eloquent reminder of his gallantry before you in the shape of that shattered arm—why, the sight of him stirs up even *my* old blood; but *you*, a young girl at an impressionable age too, were like an icicle—treated him, forsooth, with a frigid indifference that amounted to positive contempt. I could have shaken you, Florry!'

'O, how awfully knowing Mr. Bolitho is!' murmured Florence, as she turned aside to hide a smile.

'Ah, you may well turn away, Florry, conscience-stricken in the knowledge that my rebuke is merited. And the worst of it is, I could see that this coldness

was no overacted assumption of maidenly coyness, but genuine, if such a term can be so unworthily applied.'

'O Mr. Bolitho, how can you see into our hearts in this way?' said Florence archly.

'Ah, Florry, we old people can see through and through you young ones. Our mental vision can go through a whole line of young people like a straw through a row of larks. It's all here, Florry,' tapping his forehead. 'Age may dim our eyes, but experience provides us mentally with patent reflectors of the best description. Don't be cold-hearted, Florry. I have certainly never noticed anything of the sort in you before this evening; but this evening it was unmistakable.'

'The very evening of all others when my heart was warmest,' thought Florence.

'Beware of coldness of heart, Florry, my child,' resumed Mr. Bolitho, evidently determined that if for once in his life he preached a sermon he would make the most of his text. 'A cold-hearted girl will grow up into a calculating, uncharitable, intolerant, and intolerable woman of the world. Just think, Florry, when your little head rested on your little pillow, and you lay nestling upon your soft downy little bed, soothed to sleep by a delicious sense of security and the sweet consciousness of loving hearts around you, that young fellow lay far from "home, sweet home"' (Florry turned away, buried her face in her handkerchief, and gave way to tears), 'his couch probably a few feet of mud in the deadly trenches; his lullaby the savage shouts of the enemy, the shrieks of the wounded, or the rattle of musketry; his narcotic the agonies of a wound received for *you*, for *me*, for *every* English-

woman and Englishman who lives at home at ease.'

With a passionate vehemence Florence turned to Mr. Bolitho, placed her hands on his shoulders, and gazed steadfastly up into his face through her tears.

'O Mr. Bolitho, I love him!'

'Eh?' said old Bolitho, coming down with a run from eloquent declamation to gaping astonishment.

'I love him.'

'Love him?'

'Yes, dearly, fondly, with all my heart!'

'Bless my soul! This is an astounding jump from the arctic circle to the torrid zone—from thirty degrees below zero to one hundred and twenty in the shade. Do you mean to tell me you love this young man?'

'Yes, passionately.'

'Dear me,' said Mr. Bolitho; adding in a soliloquy, as he turned away from Florence, 'I had no idea I possessed this wonderful gift of eloquence to such a dangerous degree. I must use it with greater care, or give it an outlet in Parliament. Here have I, by sheer force and beauty of language, so worked upon this young girl's feelings as to actually make her fall desperately in love with a young man whom, not five minutes before, she regarded with utter indifference. I must undo the mischief.'

Here old Bolitho faced about, coughed, and assumed a severe expression of countenance.

'Florence Beatrice Henrietta, as your godfather I feel my moral responsibility most acutely, and I totally disapprove of this sudden plunge of yours into the vortex of love. At your age, Florence Beatrice, I should have taken at least three hours falling desperately in love, but you have done it in as many minutes; and now it is my

bounden duty to see that you fall out as quickly as you fell in. Why, what do you mean by it? You never set eyes on this young man before this evening.'

'O yes, I have,' said Florence. 'We have known and loved each other ever since we met at Folkestone, when mamma and I were there by ourselves, summer before last; and he had not long been sent home from the Crimea after the first time he was wounded.'

'Then it wasn't my eloquence, after all,' observed old Bolitho rather thankfully. 'Florry, you sly little puss, you've been quietly poking fun at your old friend and godfather.'

'No, I never felt more in earnest in my life than I do now. O Mr. Bolitho, you said that, while he was away in that awful land of bloodshed and pestilence, I slept through the nights in peaceful happiness. You said, too, something about my pillow. Ah, it could tell a sad little tale of "patter, patter" all through the weary long nights for many, many months.'

'Poor little pillow!' said old Bolitho, with emotion.

'The agony and suspense of that time, borne in secret, nearly wore me out,' whimpered poor little Florence, wiping her eyes with her handkerchief.

'Yes, yes,' said old Bolitho, patting her shoulder; 'I recollect now how ill you looked, and how we physicked you for outgrowing your strength, or something of that sort.'

'I suffered more than he did. O Mr. Bolitho, there is more aching in the loving hearts at home than in the wounds of those fighting abroad.'

And here Florence, completely overcome by the recollections of what she had endured, threw herself, sobbing, on her old friend's bosom.

'Don't cry, Florry,' said old Bolitho, in a very husky voice, and folding his arms round her; 'don't cry. As the old song says' (*singing*),

"O, were I Queen of England,
Supreme 'neath heaven's dome,
I'd have no fighting-men abroad,
No weeping maids at home—
I'd have no fighting-men abroad,
No weeping—"

Old jackasses in their sixty-ninth year who ought to know better;' and up went old Bolitho's handkerchief to his eyes. 'I never could stand seeing a woman cry, least of all my little goddaughter Florry,' he continued, as he enveloped his fine erubescant old proboscis in the silken folds of the handkerchief. 'The sight of a woman crying always gives me a severe cold in the head,' this statement being followed by a corroborative blast on the aforementioned feature. 'I suppose she creates a certain amount of dampness in the atmosphere. D-o-don't cry, Florry; you're giving me the influenza.'

'It's over-excitement after all these months of suspense; and then the anxiety of to-night as to what has happened between papa and Algy. There, I shan't cry any more, Mr. Bolitho.'

'Ah, Florry,' said the soft-hearted old man, holding her at arm's length and gazing fondly on the sweet girlish young face, 'how could he find it in his heart to leave you that time at Folkestone? for his brother-officers, who are never tired of singing his praises, have told me that he insisted on returning to the Crimea long before he had sufficiently recovered from his first wound to be fit for campaigning.'

'Ah, Mr. Bolitho, you do not know Algy as well as I do.'

'Well, I don't suppose I do, my dear.'

'It was because he was so brave

and so good and so true that he left me. When I tried to persuade him not to go, and pointed out that surely he had fought and bled enough for his country, and, I am now ashamed to say, added that he couldn't care for me if he insisted on going before he was ordered, he silenced me with two lines of poetry, which, he said, had been addressed more than two hundred years ago by a cavalier to his lady-love when she had chided him for leaving her to go to the wars:

"I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more."

I never have forgotten them, and never shall; they are so tender and true.'

'Well, Florry, I am glad *you* have proved more "tender and true" than the lady to whom those lines were originally addressed,' said old Bolitho, alluding, of course, to the story of the unfortunate young Lovelace, the warrior-poet in point.

'Why, do you mean to say she proved unfaithful, with those beautiful lines always whispering to her heart as they *must* have done?'

'Yes,' said Mr. Bolitho, who was as hearty an admirer of the old English ballads as Sir Philip Sidney—'yes; when he returned from the wars wounded, as Algy has done, he found her married to another.'

'O, how sad!' said Florence. 'Why, it's even more shocking than the conduct of Annie Laurie in not marrying the man who paid her such beautiful compliments about her throat and breast, and was ready to lay him down and die for her sake.'

'Well, well, Florry, it's all the same to him now whether she was faithful or not, so you needn't—'

'Hush, Mr. Bolitho! I think I hear tapping at the window. Yes,

and I hear Algy's voice calling you.'

Florence was quite right, and in what old Bolitho called a 'brace of shakes' the shutters were opened, and Algernon Warriner admitted.

'See, the conquering hero comes once more,' said old Bolitho. 'Conquering hero, what the dickens made you bolt in that way?'

'O Algy, what happened between you and papa? and what made you go away so hurriedly?'

'Yes, yes, I'll explain all; but tell me first, Florry, how your father is.'

'O, he's all right. Mamma put him into another rage, which brought him round at once. Now, Algy, tell us all about it. You can say anything you like before Mr. Bolitho. I've made him our confidant.'

'Yes, my dear boy, fire away.'

'Well, Florry, I must first explain to you the little *ruse de guerre*, or rather *d'amour*—'

'It's all the same, my dear boy, interposed old Bolitho. 'Ovid, who's an authority on the subject, says, "Love is a species of warfare."'

'Which I employed to obtain an invitation to dinner this evening from your father.'

'You needn't, Algy; I know it.'

'Why, has he told you?'

'No; I was in the room behind the screen all the time you were with papa before dinner, and I heard everything. That was my little *ruse*.'

'And why were you there, Florry?'

'To protect you, Algy.'

'Dear me, I had no idea I had such an effective little guardian angel so near me.'

'Well, but Mr. Bolitho doesn't know, Algy; so we must enlighten him. You see, Mr. Bolitho, mamma said she would

never countenance our engagement until she saw Algy a guest at papa's table by papa's own invitation. Now, Algy, you go on; you can do it quicker.'

'Well, you see, Mr. Bolitho, I knew if I could secure Mrs. Buddlecombe as an ally the battle would be half won—'

'You know, Mr. Bolitho, mamma's awfully fond of Algy.'

'And so I determined to get this invitation to dinner. I called this evening shortly before the dinner-time, and sent up a letter to Mr. Buddlecombe, stating, on my word of honour, that it was in my power to save him a large sum of money if he would grant me an immediate and private interview. Eventually this had the desired effect. I was granted the interview, and I managed to spin it out without divulging the scheme, until, what between curiosity to hear what I had to say and anxiety not to have the dinner spoiled, he was forced to adopt the middle course of inviting me to dine. Well, after dinner—'

'Now comes the part I want to know,' interpolated Florence.

'I divulged my scheme, by which Mr. Buddlecombe was to be saved thirty thousand pounds.'

'Thirty thousand pounds!' ejaculated old Bolitho. 'Bless me, quite a fortune!'

'Yes; that, I believe, is the exact amount of your dowry, isn't it, Florry?'

'Yes; but what of that, Algy?'

'Why,' said Warriner, placing his arm round Florence's waist, and drawing her tenderly to him, 'I told him I would be proud and happy to take you with nothing. That was the scheme by which he was to be saved thirty thousand pounds. Quite correct, wasn't it? On this your father nearly had a fit, and would have had one, there's not the

slightest doubt, if I had not got out of his sight as soon as possible. So I beat a rapid retreat, and waited outside, with a quiet cigar, on the look-out. Then I made a reconnaissance in the direction of this window, and on hearing Mr. Bolitho's dulcet tones, I tapped; and there I was, tapping with the pertinacity of a woodpecker for about—'

'O good gracious, Algy, what's the matter with Mr. Bolitho?'

Well might Florence be startled by the appearance her good old friend and confidant presented. He looked even nearer apoplexy than Mr. Buddlecombe had gone. His face was purple, his cheeks inflated, the veins on his forehead knotted, and his eyes seemed starting from his head. It was fully two minutes—which is a long time when you are choking—before Mr. Bolitho, by dint of vigorous slapping on the back from Florence and Warriner, recovered sufficiently to speak.

'O dear, O dear!' wheezed and gasped the old gentleman, with a twinkle in his eye which presaged a possible relapse at any moment. 'You've nearly been the death of me, my boy. Two fine old English gentlemen killed in the same evening wouldn't have been a bad bag for even a Crimean hero. You see, Florry, I was afraid of laughing outright for fear of bringing your father in. O dear, O dear, I never knew any one get the blind side of my old friend Josh Buddle before! Tread on my toe, Florry; stamp upon it, jump upon it—the right toe, the gouty one. That may induce me to take for a few moments a more serious view of things in general.'

It is highly probable that an acute twinge of gout *would* temporarily dull even the keenest sense of the ridiculous; but this

drastic measure, as prescribed by Mr. Bolitho for himself, was not applied, and his mirth was allowed to subside gradually.

'Now we must talk a little business,' was his first remark on regaining a certain amount of composure. 'I'll make it all right with your father in the end, Florry. Just at first he'll be a little obstreperous; but constant dropping will wear away a stone, and I mean to drop on to him with a little plan I've got here,' and Mr. Bolitho tapped his forehead significantly.

'Patent reflectors, Mr. Bolitho?' asked Florry archly.

'Ah, you sly little puss! No, I sha'n't tell you what my little plan is, but I'm pretty sure it will do a great deal to make the course of true love run a little more smoothly; and as there is nothing like striking when the iron is hot—precious hot it was too when we last saw it—I'll go at him this very evening. But, Warriner, my boy, until matters are a little more advanced, you must not be seen here by my old friend. It would exasperate him in his present frame of mind, and you must be off soon.'

'Certainly. My only object in reappearing on the scene was to ascertain Mr. Buddlecombe's condition, and to assure Florry that I had not been guilty of anything very outrageous.'

'O, we both knew you hadn't done anything wrong, Algy; didn't we, Mr. Bolitho?'

'Yes, yes, of course we acquitted you, my dear boy, without a trial. Now I daresay I'm a little in the way, am I not?'

'O, you could never be in the way, Mr. Bolitho,' said Florence, her heart brimming over with gratitude to the old fellow.

'Ah, that's just what your father always says, my dear. But

what I mean is, you'd like to say a few little confidential words to each other before you part, wouldn't you? I'll just go outside and keep *cave*, as we used to say at school, for your father may be back again at any moment.'

A few words should here be said in defence of Mr. Bolitho, against whom the serious charge of aiding and abetting a child in deceiving a parent might be brought by the reader. In conniving, however, at Florence's clandestine engagement with Algernon Warriner, the old gentleman was doing what he thought right, taking into consideration that Mr. Buddlecombe's fierce dogmatism, crotchets, and irritability—failings that seemed to increase every day—were not rendering the young girl's home as bright and happy as it should have been. Then, again, loving Florence as fondly as if she had been his own child, her happiness was the dearest wish of his heart; and this happiness he considered would rest on as secure a base as can be found upon earth if she became the wife of Algernon Warriner.

'Now when I cry out "*Cave!*"' said Mr. Bolitho, retiring towards the door, 'you take your departure through that window, my dear boy, and smoke another cigar in the grounds; and I'll join you in about a quarter of an hour afterwards and report progress.'

'Very well, all right,' said Warriner; adding, as Mr. Bolitho took up his position in the hall on outpost duty, 'Isn't he a first-rate old fellow, Florry?'

'O yes, he's always so kind,' said Florence.

However, they had something else to talk of besides old Bolitho.

'O Florry,' said Warriner, taking her hand in his, while the two gazed fondly at each other, 'how

I have looked forward to this moment, when, face to face, I could tell you—'

'O Algy,' murmured Florence simultaneously, 'how I have longed for an opportunity like this, when, safe from interruption, I could—'

'Cave!' said old Bolitho, rushing into the room, while in the distance Mr. Buddlecombe was heard approaching in high alter-

cation with Mrs. Buddlecombe. 'The enemy is upon us. There are times when the British infantry must retreat, and this is one of them.'

So saying Mr. Bolitho unceremoniously shoved Warriner, together with his hat and coat, through the French window and closed it after him, just a couple of moments before Mr. Buddlecombe entered.

(To be continued.)

SUNSET DREAMS.

A WINDOW open to the western breeze,
The setting sun drowned in the ruddy gold;
I saw her through the stirring chestnut-trees
That slope their broad leaves grandly fold on fold.

Strewed at my feet the pink and brown of sprays
Spoilt by the gale; the elm's new tender green
Gleaming as if the wand'ring sunlight rays
Had been entrapped in some transparent screen.

Dear little face! in ivy lattice framed,
That looked with lustrous eyes of happy light
Into my soul; O, look, all unashamed,
Along my life, making the future bright.

Still sing the thrushes on the twilight lawns,
Where whisp'ring grasses lisp an evening prayer,
And nodding daisies dream of golden dawns,
And I stand waiting—but thou art not there!

Open thy window, give me 'good-night,' dear;
Open thy heart and to my love reply;
Alas, I can but dream of thee as near,
For thou and I have said our last 'good-bye!'

G. H. G.

A STROLL IN THE HARZ.

THE Harz Mountains, the most northerly of the Central European heights, is a spot which has been strangely neglected by English tourists. Murray's Guide strongly advises them against it, calling it a mere molehill that will not bear comparison with Switzerland. This is true enough in a way, but molehills may have their charms, as even the writer in Murray is forced to admit; nay, he once so far forgets himself as to compare a certain drive in the Harz with the Trossachs. Still the whole account of this region is written in a bad tempered strain, as though the writer had been suffering from a bilious attack, and seen the world *pro tem*. with jaundiced eyes. And yet this little district well repays a visit; and the holiday-seeker who desires to combine the attractions of beautiful scenery with good air and economy will do well to turn his attention to the spot. He who would come with wife and child, and pitch his tent for some weeks, will be repaid, as well as he who desires to take a walking tour, but is not up to the great fatigues and occasional danger of a Swiss pedestrian expedition. The Harz has the further charm of containing all its attractions within a small compass; a short visit will exhaust all there is to be seen; and though many of its beauties tempt the lingerer, and every fine day reveals views and walks in a new light, a new charm, still we are freed from the harassing sense that there is a great deal of regulation sight-seeing that must

be 'done.' This alone is reposing to body and mind.

The district known as the Harz is the old Hercynian Forest of which Cæsar has left such terrifying accounts, strangely at variance with its modern aspect. It covers an area of seventy miles by thirty, and divides itself into the Upper and Lower Harz. Both have beauties of their own. The Upper Harz is wilder, its rock scenery more grotesque, its water-scooped valleys more sombre and precipitous; pines and fir-trees clothe its mountain-sides in thicker pride. The Lower Harz, on the other hand, is gentler and softer of aspect; there are more fields and pastures; the distant plains are visible, and furnish a less confined perspective; the hills are lower, the mountainous character less pronounced. For this is a curious feature about the Harz, that although its highest mountain, the Brocken, is only 3700 feet high, yet the whole region has a markedly Alpine character as regards vegetation and meteorological phenomena. Indeed, this little district has a character *sui generis*, underground, on the ground, and overground. Underground, because it is one of the most interesting of unsolved geological problems; and for the lover of mineralogy and the student of geology here is a fine field for working with the hammer. The mineral wealth of the Harz is proverbial; its gnomes and kobolds live in legendary lore; its minerals are designated by Mr. Ruskin as the aristocrats of their genus. This

quaint writer contends that there is rank among minerals as among men, and that you 'may recognise the high caste and breeding of these crystals wherever you meet them, and know at once that they are Harz born.' He further adds, 'If you want to see the gracefulest and happiest caprices of which dust is capable, you must go to the Harz; not that I ever mean to go there myself, because I want to retain the romantic feeling about the name.' This romantic feeling clings around what we have called its overground characteristics, the witch and wild huntsman associations that linger round its name. The Harz is the home of all the weirdest legends of Northern Germany, the scene of Goethe's *Walpurgis Nacht*, the home of cloud myths and storms. The lover of legends will become almost satiated here; every rock, every hill, every prominent spot, has its story.

On the ground there is much that is charming and picturesque. If perchance the Cumberland lakes, the Scotch highlands, the Welsh hills equal, or at times surpass, the Harz in scenic attractions, they cannot offer that ineffable fascination produced by a foreign land, in which the people and their ways also offer new points of interest to the eye and mind. By all means let us not neglect to visit our native land, but it is idle to pretend that the mental and physical changes are as great and beneficial as those produced by a foreign sojourn.

Supposing, then, our tourist to have decided upon a visit to the Harz, it remains to decide how to reach it. If economy be included in his programme, he cannot do better than procure from Messrs. Gaze a return-ticket to Brunswick, which he can reach, *via* Rotterdam or Flushing, within thirty

hours of leaving London. At Brunswick he will do well to halt, and devote a day to this quaint old city. If he be an antiquarian, or have an eye for the picturesque, he will be well repaid; for within the ramparts of this one-thousand-year-old city is enclosed a town of as mediæval a character as Nürnberg, Lübeck, or Danzig. From Brunswick the railway goes in two hours to Harzburg, the best halting-place for the exploration of one side of the Harz. Here are some very good *pensions*, where intending sojourners can be boarded for the moderate cost of from four to five shillings a day. Clean and tidy lodgings can, however, be obtained in the village at a much cheaper rate, while the unencumbered tourist can certainly put up for a much lower figure. Harzburg is situated at the foot of the hills that rise gradually towards the Brocken, and at the opening of a fine valley, the Radauthal, whose floor is watered by a true mountain brook, that rushes and babbles along. The fragrant odour of fir-trees pervades the whole air, and adds to the salubrity of the spot. There are many quarries worked along this valley, and this reminds us that we are in a working country; but even work is picturesque in the Harz, and the hand of man has not disfigured Nature. This arises probably from the fact that machinery is not employed in these above-ground operations, and that the means of transit are still of a primitive kind. Even the frequent blasting is not disturbing; it only wakes the echoes among the hills. In the woods, which are all under government control and carefully preserved, we often come upon charcoal-burners plying their murky trade, and looking so swarthy and picturesque that imagination easily calls up some

of the local traditions. They are, however, like all the natives, the most harmless and gentle of men; a little melancholy and silent, like most mountaineers, but true-hearted sterling natures.

Harzburg abounds in pretty walks into the woods, on to the hills, or out among the fields where flowers grow in abundance. Not the least charming of these is the ascent of the Burgberg, whose summit is gained in an hour, and where a pretty hotel makes a good halting-place for the pedestrian who wishes to explore the neighbouring woods. Here are the ruins of a former stronghold of the Emperor Henry IV., and hence starts the wild huntsman on his nightly rides, pursued by fiendish dogs. From the top is obtained a fine view over the plains, down upon Harzburg, and over the chain of mountains; the cone-shaped Brocken rising above the rest, its head usually enveloped in cloud.

It rests with the tourist's disposition whether he will 'do' Harzburg in a day, or linger a week and longer beside its woods and streams. We should next advise him to visit Goslar, which he can now reach by rail, and where he will once more find himself in a mediæval town, in no wise behind Brunswick for quaint beauty. Its market-place and Guildhall are indeed even finer; and the historical recollections that cluster round this old imperial city, now fast falling into decay, no less interesting. South of the city rises the Rammelsberg, rich in all manner of ores. Gold, silver, copper, lead, zinc, sulphur, and alum are all contained within the bowels of this bluff, a rare medley rarely packed in so small a space.

From Goslar to Oker is an affair of ten minutes by rail.

The village looks plague-stricken; sulphur-fumes hang over it; not even grass will grow in this tainted air. Here all the Rammelsberg ore is smelted. But soon a sharp turn of the road hides it from sight, and reveals the beautiful Oker valley. Its mountain-sides are thickly wooded with fir and beech, through which a footpath winds; while here and there jut barren gray crags of granite that seem to threaten destruction to all who pass, and down beneath foam the dark-coloured waters of the Oker. Every turn of the sinuous road, which is entirely blasted out of the living rock, reveals new beauties. Steadily ascending, it reaches at last red-roofed Clausthal, a town 1740 feet above the sea, yet bearing all the aspect of an Alpine site. Corn will not grow, though the altitude is not really great; the winters are long and severe. Here the centre of activity is underground, and whoever would see the admirable mining operations of this country should visit one or other of its famous shafts—the Dorothea or the Caroline.

From Clausthal we can ascend the Brocken. It is the wildest, but not the most beautiful, ascent; for there are many ways of reaching this famous summit. To do so, we must cross the bleak plateau of the Upper Harz, and pass the curious Rehberger Graben and Oderteich; the latter, an artificial reservoir of the waters that rise on the moors of the Brocken; the former, the viaduct that conveys these waters to Clausthal and Andreasberg to work the mines, water not being obtainable in any abundance nearer at hand. Hence over the Brockenfeld, where lie in wild confusion those great masses of rock whence the mountain derives its name (*Brocken*, pieces broken off). He who would

follow in the footsteps of Goethe must make a *détour* by Andreasberg, a matter of thirteen miles, to ascend by way of the swamps of Schierke and Elend, and see the road immortalised in *Faust*, but much tamed since the poet's time. On the summit, where the witches hold their Sabbath, is an inn, inhabited all the year round, though the snow in winter often lies twenty feet high, and even in summer there are places where it never melts. The plateau is small, and almost absorbed by the massive, low, ship-like hotel, in which fires burn all the year round. The view from here, if seen, is very fine, and we ourselves had the rare good fortune to behold it. All the Harz lay at our feet, and our eyes could penetrate far into the plain. Too soon, however, one of the thick driving mists that haunt this spot blotted out the whole; and this is the usual fate of the traveller.

He who has ascended as we proposed must descend by way of the Ilsethal, the enchanting valley celebrated in song by Heine, and not easily forgotten by any who have ever traversed it. The brooklet rushes down from the Brocken, in an almost unbroken succession of little waterfalls, through a narrow, rocky, wooded defile. At one point a wild mass of red granite rears its head above the rest. This is the Ilsenstein, whence a fine extensive view over a wild landscape is obtained. Ilsenburg, a little lower down, is a small town, charmingly situated, where excellent iron *objets d'art* are cast. A road leads thence to Wernigerode; but the pedestrian and lover of beauty must retrace his steps a little back into the valley, and reach sleepy old-fashioned Wernigerode by way of the Steinerne Renne, where the waters of the

Holzemme dash down a steep incline over huge blocks of stone.

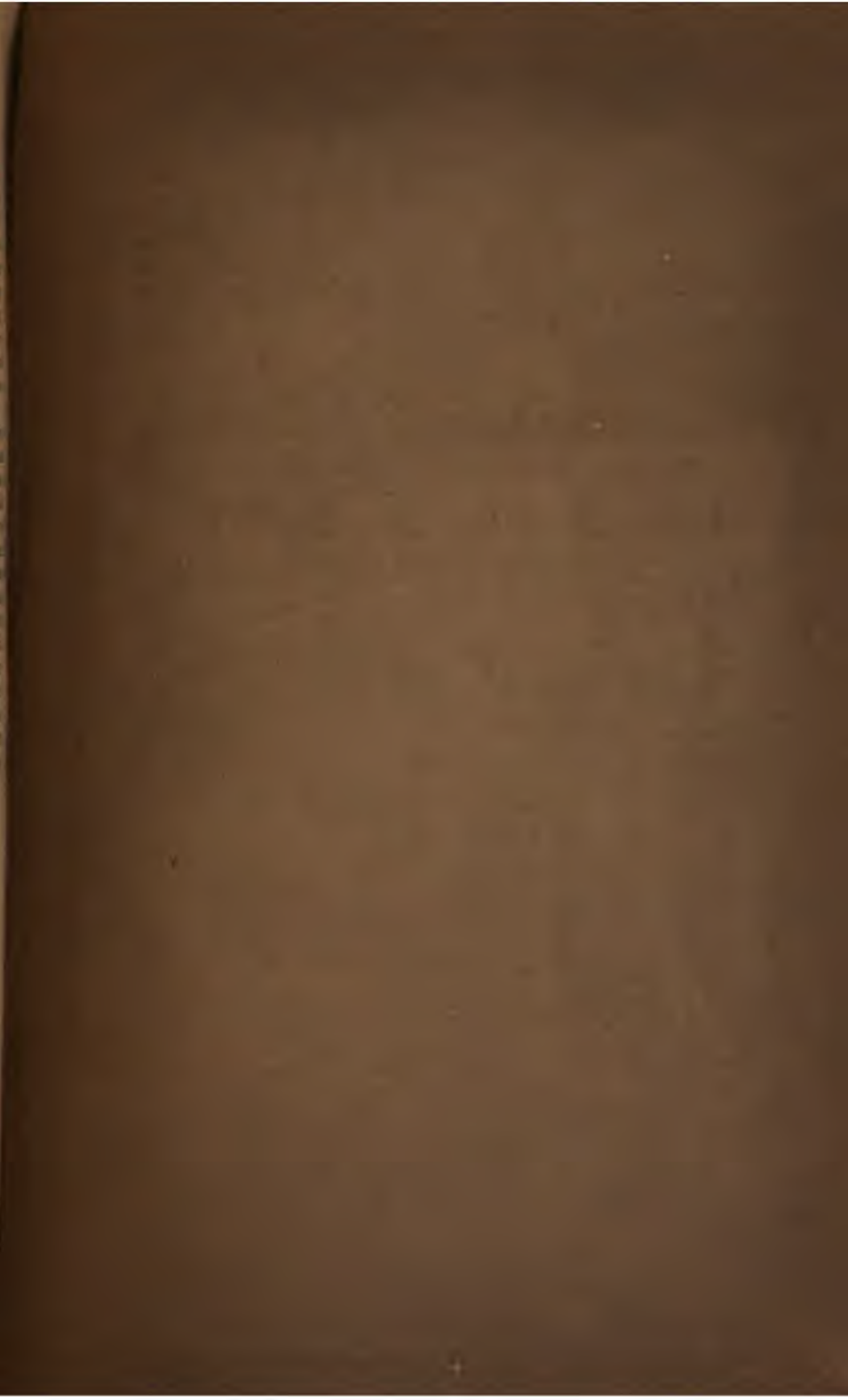
At Wernigerode the traveller will linger or no, according to his inclination. For ourselves, we were charmed with this Sleepy Hollow and its fine specimens of mediæval timber architecture. In any case Elbingerode must be his next goal; for thence he reaches Rübeland, rich in stalactite caverns, of which in especial the Baumannshöhle well repays a visit.

We are now nearing the culminating point of wild beauty which the Harz can boast, the gorge of the Bode. This can be approached from two sides, either by way of Blankenburg and Thale, or across the hills to Treseburg and down the valley to its foot. We recommend the latter, which, though the rougher and less frequented road, well repays any little extra fatigue or discomfort. From Treseburg, where the gorge begins, to Thale, where it ends, the walk, which occupies about two hours and a half, presents one unbroken series of scenes increasing in boldness as they near Thale, a reason the more for obtaining the effect downwards. At first the Bode seems a wide placid river, but gradually it gets wedged in closer and closer by rocky walls, until at last it has to cut its way by force, brawling and foaming along through a narrow defile of majestic cliffs of fantastic shape, now tree-grown, now bare. Close by Thale a magnificent wall of rock closes in the valley. This is called the Rosstrappe, and affords a splendid view down into the gorge, a thousand feet beneath. A steep zigzag path brings us once more into Thale, where are to be found the best, but also the dearest, inns in the Harz.

The traveller has now exhausted rapidly all the stock-sights of the Upper Harz but one, the Hexentanzplatz, a perpendicular cliff opposite the Rosstrappe, and which affords a yet finer view over the whole mountain chain of the Harz. This he can see by ascending some two thousand rough rock-cut steps, or he can combine it with a day's excursion that will give him a good general idea of the less grand but idyllic scenery of the Lower Harz. For this purpose he should take a carriage and start early from Thale; driving through Suderode and Gernrode, two light sunny little spots that lie close together; ascend the Stubenberg, whence he will obtain a pretty view into the plain. Hence he can drive to the Mädesprung, and through the pretty Selkethal, whose characteristic is soft-wooded slopes, to Alexisbad, a little watering-place sunk in the hollow of the hills. From here a carriage-road, chiefly through thick forest, will take him back to the

Hexentanzplatz, the witches' dancing-floor, whence he will see the superb view we have mentioned above, and thus worthily close his Harz excursion. The railroad from Thale will take him in eight hours to Dresden, or to any other spot he chooses. If, as Murray words it, he be bent on making the entire tour of the Harz, there are still many pretty spots he can explore besides those we have briefly indicated.

Such approximately is the trip we should recommend. It is difficult to speak of costs, these depend so much upon individual habits. It is quite possible to live in the Harz at the rate of from five to ten shillings a day. Guides are quite needless, except for the Brocken, where the swampy nature of the ground and the frequent dense mists render them desirable. Neither are carriages nor mules required, except by the feeble; and he is but a poor pedestrian who cannot manage his own knapsack.





UNDER THE SHADOW OF A TULIP TREE

LONDON SOCIETY.

The Holiday Number for 1880.

A JUNE LOVE-STORY.

CHAPTER I.

'Do you expect that boy up here this morning, Nina?'

'He said he should come at about eleven.'

'For lawn-tennis, I suppose,' said Mrs. Hilton, with a little sarcasm in the tone of her voice.

Nina Carlyle lifted her pretty head, which had been bent over her work, and looked at her married sister with that innocent calmness which is the peculiar gift granted to clear blue eyes with thick brown lashes. 'Of course,' she answered; 'I really want practice, Cicely.'

'You have had plenty during the last week,' answered Mrs. Hilton. 'Gerald will find you wonderfully improved.'

'I hope so,' said Nina demurely; 'but he doesn't care much for tennis himself.'

Cicely made a little movement of impatience, and then burst out laughing. Nina did not laugh, but a smile crept to the corners of her lips.

'It's ridiculous talking in this way,' said Cicely. 'You know very well what I'm hinting at, so I may as well say it straight out. Why can't you leave poor Sidney Ansdell alone?'

'My dear Cicely, I'm not hurting him. If he likes to come up to

your house and play lawn-tennis with your sister, why should you be so inhospitable as to object? Considering I've come to stay with you for the first time after your marriage, you might as well try to make my visit pleasant.'

'It is only, how will Gerald like it?'

'I don't care. I'm not going to deny myself every amusement that falls in my way because Gerald mayn't happen to like it. Besides, why on earth should Gerald object to my playing lawn-tennis?'

'It isn't that,' said Mrs. Hilton, with some spirit. 'But why on earth should not Gerald, seeing you are engaged to him, object to your flirting with Sidney Ansdell?'

There was a slight flush on Nina's cheek.

'"Come, come, elder sister," she quoted. "You are too young in this." You only came out of Egypt, as Scud East says, you know, yourself last night, Cis. Don't look vexed, dear. I will be a good girl when Gerald comes down here; but I like Mr. Ansdell, and I don't see why I shouldn't be nice to him.'

'And very nice it will be for him, poor boy, when Gerald arrives and monopolises you.'

'He will get over it,' said Miss

Carlyle placidly. 'I fancy the poor boy, as you call him, is quite equal to taking care of himself.'

'Here he is,' said Cicely, as a tall figure in a suit of gray dittos, with a racket in hand, appeared at the further end of the distant field, vaulted over the haha fence into the orchard, and so proceeded to where the sisters were sitting in the garden under the shadow of a tulip-tree.

'So you have come at last,' said Miss Carlyle, holding out her hand, and glancing up at young Ansdell's pleasant frank face, with its good gray eyes and well-cut mouth. 'I mean to beat you this morning; for when Mr. Calthorp comes down here, we sha'n't be able to have so many games.'

What was it made her mention her future husband's name—her sister's lecture, or a sudden impulse of loyalty towards him, born from the knowledge which had just flashed upon her, that it was pleasant to her to look at Sidney Ansdell's winning face? Whatever had prompted her speech, she felt sorry for it as she saw Sidney's pained look of bitter remembrance.

If Nina were a flirt, as some people said, she was a very tender-hearted one; she hated to see people unhappy; she could not bear to see Sidney's troubled face without trying to bring back its sunshine.

'Now you have come,' she said, 'we will have a really good game, and waste no more time. I'll go and fetch my racket.'

With a bright smile she ran indoors, leaving Cicely and Sidney under the tulip-tree.

The little matron of four months' marriage was rather vexed by her sister's conduct; from her dignity of married woman Cicely looked on at the comedietta in which Nina was playing the leading part, and saw much which worried her.

Gerald Calthorp, the man to whom Nina was engaged, was an individual who would by no means be satisfied by a divided allegiance, and a quarrel between him and Nina would be most unfortunate, thought Mrs. Hilton. Mr. Calthorp, in the opinion of most people, was quite the ideal husband for a girl like Miss Carlyle. He was well born, handsome, cultured, rather gravely courteous in manner, with a very good fortune and a beautiful place in Hants; the very man to contrast picturesquely in marriage with Nina's quaint fitful grace, her sudden pretty changes of mood, always sweet, and her bright girlish beauty, as fresh and charming as the sunlit may-bloom.

'It would be too horrid,' meditated Cicely, 'if, after Nina's actually winning a man like that, she were to lose him, just because she can't resist bewitching poor Sidney. And how the mother would scold me, and declare I wasn't fit to be trusted with Nina! She can't manage the girl herself; but she would blame me dreadfully if the engagement were broken off down here. Perhaps Gerald will be able to keep Nina in order. I fancy she is a little afraid of him. I'm sure I am.'

All this passed through Cicely's mind as she sat working on the lawn, looking very dainty and girlish in her white dress, with its ribbons of olive and pale pink, and quite ignoring the six feet of humanity who stood by her, troubled in mind as a moth might be who learns that the flame he is attracted by is about to be screened from his approach for the benefit of a man wishing to engross its light.

Cicely had almost forgotten his presence when suddenly he asked, 'Mrs. Hilton, is Mr. Calthorp coming to stay with you?'

'Yes; he comes next week.' She was really sorry for Sidney; he was the eldest son of a family who were very old friends of her husband's, and she was vexed that pain and sorrow should come to him through her sister. She liked him very much; if she had never seen or heard of Mr. Calthorp, might have wished no better amusement or employment than to throw him and Nina together; but as it was—

Yet there was a sombre look in his eyes that troubled her; it was so unhappy. She murmured something about 'having some more work to get from indoors; if Sidney waited, Nina would be out in a moment;' and then left him standing moodily by the tree in a very gloomy state of mind.

Entering the house Mrs. Hilton sought her sister, whom she found in the hall, fastening the ribbons of her tennis-shoes, and humming a tune she had caught up from Sidney. Cicely plucked up heart, and said abruptly,

'Nina, that poor boy is very much in love with you.'

No answer. Nina's face was bent over her shoe; but Cicely saw that the girl's white neck grew rosy, and her severity increased.

'It isn't kind or fair to him to encourage him as you do. He will only be unhappy afterwards.'

Nina raised her head and looked full at her sister.

'Cicely,' she said, 'I won't be bullied because I don't like to see a person dull or wretched when I can make them otherwise.'

'Very well, I can't say any more. If Gerald—'

'Gerald!' said Nina rather angrily. 'I won't have Gerald continually thrown at me. I really think that you and mother will make me quite hate the thought of him by always saying "Gerald this," and "Gerald that," as if I were his bond-slave, and not the girl he is

engaged to. I won't be tutored and lectured. I want to enjoy myself in my own way; and Gerald himself knows it, and trusts me, which is more than you seem inclined to do!'

Mrs. Hilton was so far provoked by her sister's mutinous speech as to use a weapon she had meant to keep in reserve.

'You say Gerald Calthorp trusts you; at all events he seems to think you need looking after.'

Nina started and quivered ever so slightly; and there was a restive sparkle in her eyes as Cicely drew a letter from her pocket, saying,

'I heard from him this morning. I didn't tell you, because there was part of the letter I didn't like to show you; but I suppose I had better do so now.'

'You had much better have done so at first,' muttered Nina rebelliously, as she took the letter from Cicely's hand and read the page to which the latter pointed.

Mrs. Hilton was a little frightened at the effect of her proceeding. The girl read her lover's epistle without comment; but her cheeks grew a deep rose-colour, her blue eyes flashed, and her pretty lips were compressed. When she had finished the letter she folded it slowly and returned it to Cicely, saying,

'Indeed! That is what he thinks, is it?'

Then she took up her racket, and, without another word, went out into the garden, leaving Cicely very doubtful whether she had not done more harm than good.

After a few moments' consideration Mrs. Hilton turned her steps towards her husband's study. Arthur Hilton was an author; he had been at the Bar; but, on inheriting a small estate from an elder brother, he had thrown up the Bar and settled himself in the pretty old-fashioned house to which, four

months ago, he had brought home Cicely as its mistress.

'Are you busy, Arthur, or can I come in?'

'All right, old child, what is it?'

Cicely assumed the penitential attitude which is rather a favourite one with young wives: she knelt down by her husband's side, and, looking up at him with big serious brown eyes, she said,

'I think I have done rather a foolish thing. I showed Nina Gerald Calthorp's letter.'

'Phew! Did you want them to quarrel?'

'No; but I fancy Nina is flirting with Sidney Ansdell, and so—'

'And so you did the very thing to make her more bent on holding the sweet jest up. Are you quite certain you understand Nina?'

'I am very fond of her; I want her to be happy.'

'And that means you want her to marry Calthorp?'

'Don't you, Arthur?'

'It is hardly my business; but I don't feel quite as sure as you do that Nina is in love with him.'

'O, she must be!' said Cicely, horror-stricken. 'Why did she engage herself? She was not forced to do so.'

'No; but she heard Calthorp's praises from every one, especially from your mother, and it was easy enough for her to fancy she was in love with such a paragon.'

'Why, don't you like Gerald?'

'I think him a confounded prig,' was the reply that rose to Mr. Hilton's lips; but he suppressed it, and merely answered,

'O, he's a good fellow enough; but not the kind of man I should have thought Nina would have cared for. He is formal, and fifteen years older than she is, and with a mighty good opinion of himself. Of course Nina may cherish a wild devotion for him; you ought to know her better than I do.'

Cicely looked very nearly ready to cry, seeing which her husband drew her closer to him.

'Don't you worry, childie. If there is to be a break between them, it had better be before marriage than after; and if they really care for each other, you needn't be afraid of their falling out seriously.'

'But Sidney—'

'O, he won't come to any harm; young men's hearts are not so easily broken as you fancy. Look: there he and Nina are, crossing the garden to the strawberry-beds. They do make a pretty picture, as Lady Anne Newcome said of Clive and Ethel.'

He turned to look at Cicely.

'Confess now,' he said, 'if Sidney had 5000*l.* a year, you would prefer him for Nina's husband to Calthorp.'

'Yes, perhaps I might; but I don't think,' said Cicely dutifully, 'that mother would.'

'After all,' returned her husband, 'Nina is the person most interested in the point.'

CHAPTER II.

In the mean time Miss Carlyle had rejoined young Ansdell in the garden. She looked wonderfully charming in her dress of cream-coloured serge, with a broad black sash tied round her slender waist; a garden hat, of what, I believe, is called the Mother Hubbard shape, on her bright hair; and with the flush, the perusal of Gerald Calthorp's letter had called up, still lingering on her cheek.

She was very angry with him, partly because she felt she had laid herself open to his strictures, partly because she was indignant at the line of conduct he hinted at his being likely to pursue when they were married.

When they were married! Till about a week ago Nina had fancied

she had grown quite accustomed to the idea of being Mr. Calthorp's wife; to-day she simply felt an intense repugnance to it. She thought to herself it was only because of the letter, and the persistent way in which her mother, and now Cicely, referred her every action to the test of 'Would Gerald like it?'

In her secret soul she chafed at a certain lordliness which she had begun to perceive through the unexceptionable and affectionate bearing of her lover towards her.

Would this have been the case had she really been in love with him? If he had really loved her, would aught have appeared in his bearing that could have irked a girl who loved him?

Nina had never asked herself either of these questions; but since she had come to stay with her newly-married sister she had vaguely wondered if she would ever feel as free and confident from misconstruction with Gerald Calthorp as Cicely did with Arthur Hilton.

At this moment she only felt that she hated the idea of ever yielding herself and her freedom to a man who spoke of her with the critically patronising tone of Mr. Calthorp's epistle to Cicely; and she turned with relief to the person in whose eyes all she did seemed right, the young man waiting for her on the lawn with eyes that brightened at the sound of her step.

'I don't think I want to play tennis this morning,' she said to him. 'Let's go and eat strawberries.'

Sidney assented readily enough. Even an ardent devotee of lawn-tennis, who is also three-and-twenty and in love, may prefer picking and eating strawberries with his lady to playing tennis with her. At tennis one is forced

to keep a certain distance from the adversary, who hits about the ball and one's heart at the same time; while in strawberry-gathering a delicious proximity to fruit and mistress seems part of the situation.

Such was somewhat the current of Sidney Ansdell's ideas on this June morning; and perhaps his pleasure was sweeter because of its utter foolishness. He chose to forget that the girl he loved was engaged to another man, and, as he thought, heedless of him and his passion, and to enjoy the present as he knelt among the strawberry-beds by Nina's side.

"Doubtless God might have made a better berry, but doubtless He never did," said Nina, as, when they had feasted royally and made fearful havoc among the British Queens, she rose from her stooping posture with fingers as rosy as those of Eos herself. 'Mr. Ansdell, have you had enough? I haven't. I propose we gather some in a cabbage-leaf and eat them under the ash at the top of the knoll; but we sha'n't have any appetite left for lunch.'

Of course Sidney was agreeable; and when they had collected enough fruit, they rambled up the little grassy ascent at the end of the garden, and, sitting down under the great cool boughs of the ash-tree, took their ease in the summer noon. Above their heads there was heard the trembling ripple and glad gush of a thrush's note; and as they listened to that song, fresher and more gladsome, if less passion-fraught, than the nightingale's, their eyes looked far away at the silvery seas of the unmown hay-fields, seen through the limpid shivering haze of June.

Neither Nina nor Sidney spoke much; he had given himself up to the charm of the present, and she would have done the same,

had not a vague trouble weighed on her and dulled her enjoyment.

'Mr. Ansdell,' said Nina at last, 'I wonder—'

'Yes?' Sidney's bright earnest face turned to hers; there was some force in his look which made her shrink and hesitate.

'Nothing,' she said; then added recklessly in a rather unreal tone, which, if any one who accused her of flirting had been present, would have confirmed his opinion, 'If you were married, would you want obedience from your wife?'

He looked puzzled; she was anxious to learn his answer; it came slowly,

'I don't know.'

'That is frank, at all events,' she said, with a jarring laugh. 'It means you would. Men are all alike; they make laws for us women, and then call us unwomanly if we refuse to obey them.'

'I think you are wrong,' he answered quietly. 'No man worth anything would want obedience to himself as himself.'

'O!' answered Nina ironically, yet interested. 'What would he want, then?'

'Obedience to right as right, both from himself and her.'

'I don't quite understand.' The girl's face softened, and she leant a little forward. She had affected to speak of Sidney as a boy to Cicely, but she had never thought of him as one.

She knew him to be simple and unselfish, strong and tender and true; but she had never respected him quite as much as she did now, never felt the strange submission and stranger rebellion that now were warring in her heart.

'I think,' he tried to explain, 'that they would both try to yield obedience to right, and try to help each other to yield it. I'm awfully bad at expressing it, but surely you know what I mean.'

'Ah, yes,' said Nina, trying to be sarcastic, and failing woefully.

'Like the end of the "Princess."'

Sidney had not quite passed the stage when clever young men are apt to quote poetry.

'Do you remember the last lines?' he said.

She made no answer, and he repeated gravely, his eyes fixed on the shining fields,

"In true marriage lies
Nor equal nor unequal: each fulfils
Defect in each; and always thought in
thought,
Purpose in purpose, will in will, they
grow
The single pure and perfect animal,
The two-celled heart beating, with one
full stroke,
Life."

Nina was silent; the beauty of the words, the tones of the speaker's voice, had thrilled and vibrated through her. Yes, she could understand the loveliness of such marriage as this; but would her and Gerald Calthorp's future realise it?

For a moment she felt sick and stunned as the whole truth burst upon her: she did not love the man she had promised to marry, and—

Sidney's voice broke upon her thought, as it were answering it.

'Miss Carlyle—Nina—can you recollect the words that end the poem? May I say them?'

Yes, she remembered them:

'Indeed I love thee; come,
Yield thyself up; my hopes and thine are
one:
Accomplish thou my manhood and thy-
self;
Lay thy sweet hands in mine, and trust
to me.'

But he must not say them; she was bound to Gerald Calthorp.

She turned to Sidney; she saw his face transformed by the might of a young man's love, reverent, eager, passionate with hope and fear. She was angry with the world and herself, so turned fiercely on him.

'How can you?' she said. 'How can you? You know I am not free.'

Her voice quivered; she rose and passed swiftly down the green turf-path leading to the house, trembling and wretched, and yet with a thrill of wild passionate happiness at her heart, such as she had never known before and did not care to analyse.

Sidney did not follow her; perhaps, if he had understood the feeling which prompted the indignant reproach of her words, he would not have let them pass without a reply. But he did not feel himself free from blame, and so he sat there, when Nina had gone, thinking he knew his fate at last, and that he had been a fool from the first.

CHAPTER III.

'O, I wish—I wish I knew what to do!'

Nina was sitting alone in her room by the side of her bed. The late afternoon sunshine shone in through the creeper-framed window of the pretty, purely fresh, little chamber, and fell on the girl's fair face and white dressing-gown and the bright hair which lay on her shoulders in shining ripples.

Miss Carlyle ought to have been dressing for dinner; but she had for the moment forgotten that duty of civilised life in the doubt and distress which filled her mind.

It was the first moment she had had to herself since Sidney had tried to tell her of his love. All the afternoon Cicely had monopolised her, and now she was trying to collect her thoughts and recover from the stunted feeling of everything being a dream. It seemed such a long time since she had left Sidney that morning in the garden.

Was he unhappy? she wondered. He could not be more so than she was. What was she to do? She

could not leave Farley; if she did, it would attract so much remark that she would be sure to let out the truth. Yet how could she go on meeting him and talking to him with the memory of those minutes under the ash-tree in both their minds?

She could not break her word to Mr. Calthorp—that would be wrong and dishonourable; but as matters now stood, she was deceiving him. Could she tell him all the truth and let him decide? O no; anything were better than that.

But Sidney! She knew now that life spent by his side, for his sake, would have had a new sweetness. She had determined not to think of him; but for all her efforts his face was still before her, his voice still rang in her ears, the thought of him was dominant in her mind. Would it always be so? When she was married to Gerald Calthorp, would she still be haunted by the strong idea of Sidney Ansdell, who had loved her, whom she could have—whom she did love?

The second bell startled her from her dreary self-questioning. She sprang up, twisted her loose hair into a thick coil, hastily donned her evening dress of soft smoke-gray muslin, and fastening a cluster of many-hued sweet-peas at her breast with a knot of black velvet, she ran swiftly down the low stairs to the drawing-room.

'I thought Sidney was dining here to-night,' said Mr. Hilton, as he helped the soup.

'He sent up a note to say he could not,' answered Cicely. 'I don't know why. Rather rude of him, I think.'

As has been hinted, Nina had a bad trick of blushing, and her brother-in-law saw that her face took a colour as vivid as that of the rosy sweet-peas on her dress. He drew his own conclusions.

Dinner was less cheerful than it generally was at Farley. Nina seemed either feverishly bright or desponding; and Cicely was pondering in her brain the idea of a tennis-party she meant to give when Mr. Calthorp arrived, so was unusually silent.

By the time coffee and fruit had been discussed in the verandah, to which they always adjourned after dinner, the sunset in the west had paled, and cleared to soft depths of mellow amber, through which shone the first lucent stars.

'I shall take a stroll with my cigar,' said Mr. Hilton at last. 'Will either of you accompany me?'

His wife shook her head.

'After such a broiling day as this,' she said, 'one is glad to rest in peace. Will you go, Nina?'

'I am tired,' Miss Carlyle answered; and it was the truth.

Arthur Hilton lit his cigar, and, donning a wideawake, strolled slowly along the garden-path, and, opening a white gate, passed into the dewy fields.

He had sauntered some way under the shadowy elms in the fast-falling dusk, when he saw, a little way off, a small red spark it was natural to conjecture came from a cigar.

'Hallo, Sid, is it you? Why didn't you come up to dinner?'

Young Ansdell murmured something confusedly about a 'deuce of a headache, no use to any one like that,' and moodily strolled along by Mr. Hilton's side.

'Comes of reading too hard,' said Arthur laconically.

Sidney laughed rather wretchedly. 'You are wrong there; I haven't touched a law-book for the last fortnight.'

'So,' thought Arthur,

"My only books were women's looks,
And folly all they taught me."

But he kept his reflections to himself.

'I'm sorry you didn't put in an appearance,' he said. 'You might have brightened us. As it was, I was like that little boy in the fable, who asked all the animals to play with him, and couldn't find any who would.'

'I shouldn't have been very lively.'

'At all events you would have been some one to speak to. Cicely is on hospitable thoughts intent, and hasn't a word to throw to a dog or her husband, and as to Nina—'

'Isn't Miss Carlyle well?'

In spite of Sidney's efforts, there was something guilty and conscious in his voice.

'What has he been up to?' thought Mr. Hilton. 'Hanged if I don't believe he's proposed to her!'

'Not very,' he answered. 'She says it is the heat; but I am inclined to ascribe both yours and her indisposition to the same cause: a too liberal indulgence in British Queens.'

'Do you object?'

'Not I, my dear boy. Strawberries are plentiful, and I'm not your keeper or Nina's. The latter individual doesn't arrive till next week.'

Silence, only broken by the slow regular footfalls of the two men and the rustle of the breeze through the dark leaves above their heads.

'Hilton, I'm the most miserable beggar on the face of the earth,' burst out Sidney abruptly.

'Is Calthorp the cause?'

'Yes, confound him, or myself, or—or—he's not to blame, I suppose. I've only myself to thank.'

The tone was so miserable, Arthur felt heartily sorry for the young man by his side. 'Is it so bad?' he asked kindly, and the full warm sympathy of his voice touched Sidney.

'You guessed?' he said; 'you saw I cared for her.'

'Yes. I'm sorry for you, Sid; but have you told her?'

'Yes; you think I'm to blame, I know. Perhaps I am; but I wonder whether you wouldn't have done the same in my case. I ought to have kept out of her way, you'll say; but I couldn't, and wouldn't have done so if I could!' ended Sidney defiantly.

'*Qui s'excuse, s'accuse*,' said Arthur. 'I didn't say you were to blame, but I think you were.'

'How?' asked Sidney sullenly.

'Nina's engaged to be married.'

'I know that well enough,' said poor Sid, with a groan.

'Come, be a man,' returned Mr. Hilton kindly; but feeling rather guilty in his inmost soul for quietly giving such cold comfort to his friend, while his own course of love had run so smooth. 'If she were married, you wouldn't have told her you cared for her.'

'Of course not. What do you take me for?'

'I say you wouldn't have done so; but after all it comes to much the same thing. It is a kind of insult to a girl to tell her you care for her when she is engaged to another man. It implies you hope she will change her mind, throw over the other fellow and take you; and therefore supposes she has engaged herself to a man she doesn't care for, which I say is insulting her.'

'I don't see that,' answered Sidney impatiently. 'It's wire-drawing. When a man loves a girl and can possibly win her as she is, pure and dear and fair, or when, like me, he has not even hope, he has a right to tell her that, fool as he is, he has been able to see how lovely she is. I had a right to put my fate to the touch, and save myself from being haunted by the idea that it might

have been different if I had told her all. I shall never think that now.'

Arthur felt foolishly, irrationally sorry for the lad.

'I'm going up to London to-morrow,' said Sidney, after a pause. 'I sha'n't be down here again till she and that fellow have gone. So good-night and good-bye for the present.'

A warm hand-grasp was all answer. Sidney sprang over the stile by which he and Mr. Hilton were standing, and went swiftly homewards.

'Just as well,' thought Arthur. 'If Nina doesn't care for him, he had better be out of the way; and if she does, she isn't the girl I take her for, or worth his love, if she doesn't throw over Calthorp and endure her mother's black looks. She mayn't know her own mind at once; but when she does, she will do what she thinks right, *ruat cælum* and 15,000*l.* a year.'

CHAPTER IV.

It was ten days later, the afternoon of Cicely's garden-party, and the garden at Farley was bright with pretty faces and dresses. Mr. Calthorp was on view, and his host mentally wondered how he liked it, remembering his own agonies as an engaged man; but Miss Carlyle's *fiancé* was gifted with a serene urbanity of manner, enviable, if Grandisonian, which enabled him to defy criticism even in his present trying position.

Cicely flitted about, bright and animated, sustained by the consciousness that the supply of ices was sufficient, and that her dress was the prettiest in her *trousseau*. Only one thing rather disturbed her peace of mind—Nina.

For the last ten days Miss Car-

lyle had not been like herself; with every one except Mr. Calthorp she was nervous, fitful, and restless; and towards him her manner had entirely changed. Her old bright, playful, half defiant, half bewitching ways with her lover had vanished; she was strangely humble, gentle, and quiet.

A highly commendable change perhaps, considering Mr. Calthorp was soon to be her lord and master; and yet there was something in Nina's subdued manner which perplexed and distressed her sister.

Among the first arrivals were the Ansdells, Sidney's mother and his sister Lucy, a pretty *châtaine*, two or three years his senior.

'Have you heard from Sidney lately?' inquired Cicely, as she stood chatting with Mrs. Ansdell on the lawn, with Lucy and Nina standing by.

'I expect you will see him over here this afternoon,' answered Mrs. Ansdell. 'His father went up to town two or three days ago, and I had a letter from him this morning, saying that Sid looked anything but well, and that he should bring him down with him by this afternoon's train. I left a note at home to tell them to come on and join us here, so I suppose they will turn up at about six o'clock.'

'I'm so glad,' said Mrs. Hilton, who had of late forgotten her disquietude about Nina and Sidney, now that Mr. Calthorp was at hand to guard his own interests.

Nina said nothing, but a tumultuous throb of joy seemed to overpower her. In vain she said to herself it was nothing to her, his absence or his presence. She has missed him so terribly, that, whether it were right or wrong, she could not but rejoice in the thought of seeing him once more.

She was her old self again that

afternoon, mutinous, coquettish, and charming, and looking her very best in a quaintly pretty dress of foulard, in which gold and cream and olive were cunningly intermingled, looped over an olive-silk petticoat. In her slouched white-felt hat, and at her throat, she wore yellow roses; her eyes were shining and her cheeks had their loveliest flush. Mr. Calthorp had reason to be proud of his choice of a wife.

He looked, however, rather moody than otherwise. Nina seemed suddenly to have recovered her old independence of manner towards him, and favoured him with less of her attention than she vouchsafed to gawky undergraduates and rubicund and portly J.P.s. Mr. Calthorp meditated a gentle but firm remonstrance, when he and his betrothed should once more be alone. He was not jealous, or he thought so; but he wished Nina to cultivate a greater reticence and repose of manner than were hers at present.

It was true Nina's demeanour that afternoon laid her open to the charge of wayward gaiety and coquetry; and only her brother-in-law, as he noted the brightness of her eyes and the vivid colour of her cheeks, suspected she was under the influence of some abnormal excitement.

She herself hardly knew what she did or said; her whole being seemed absorbed in intent waiting for the coming of the man whom, ten days before, she had rebuked for daring to tell her of his love.

Why had he not understood her words, her heart, better? Why had he not wrenched her secret from her, and claimed her by the right of his love and hers? For she loved him, and, now that it was too late, felt as though she could have faced everything—the world's sneers, her mother's anger, Mr.

Calthorp's just indignation—with Sidney Ansdell by her side.

It was no good thinking over all this now; she had chosen for herself. Still she was glad, she would see him once more before she left Farley next week. When she came there again it would be as Mr. Calthorp's wife.

So she waited and watched and listened, laughed and talked, played tennis and drank iced coffee, and still neither old Mr. Ansdell nor his son appeared, and the afternoon was nearly over.

Nina's heart sank within her breast. Sidney would not come to-night. It was eight o'clock, and nearly every one had gone, except Mrs. Ansdell and Lucy, whom Cicely was trying to persuade to stay the evening.

'Well, since our mankind haven't had the grace to come and escort us home, I don't see why we shouldn't revenge ourselves, mamma,' said Lucy.

'Arthur will walk home with you,' Cicely was beginning, when a servant crossed the lawn with an orange-coloured missive in her hand.

'The page from Deighton brought this over, ma'am, for Mrs. Ansdell.'

Poor Mrs. Ansdell! She took the telegram quietly enough, expecting to find within a line from her husband to say he and Sidney would not leave London that day; but when she had opened it, she stood staring at it as if dazed. Then she held it to Lucy with a sob, 'O my boy, my boy!'

Nina stood by, her lips white and quivering at the sound of that cry.

Lucy read the telegram:

"R. Ansdell, Royal Hotel, Coltham, to Mrs. Ansdell, Deighton Place, Tunford.

"Railway accident near Coltham. Sidney dangerously hurt. Come to us by next up-train. It is urgent."

CHAPTER V.

Two hours had passed since the arrival of the telegram. The Ansdells had left for Coltham with Arthur, who saw that both Mrs. Ansdell and Lucy were so utterly wretched and stupefied that his escort and presence would be a comfort and help to them.

Mrs. Hilton and Mr. Calthorp were sitting in the drawing-room. Nina was not with them, and they both fancied she had gone to her own room, as she had pleaded a headache earlier in the evening.

'Do you expect Hilton back to-night?' inquired Gerald.

'O yes; he said he was sure to return by the last train, and sent word from the station that the line was clear. It's very sad, isn't it? Poor Sidney!'

'Very sad. Is he the eldest son?'

'No; Jack Ansdell is the eldest; he is in India with his regiment. Sidney has only just left Oxford, and is reading for the Bar.'

'Which means living on his father for the next fifteen years.'

'No, it doesn't in his case,' said Cicely, rather angrily. 'Sidney was left 500*l.* a year by his mother's brother, and he is very clever. Arthur says he is sure to make his way, unless now—' and Cicely broke off with a sob.

'You are tired out, Cicely,' said Mr. Calthorp. 'If you won't think me impertinent, I should advise you to follow Nina's example and go to bed. I'll sit up for Hilton,' he spoke kindly, almost tenderly.

Cicely shook her head.

'I couldn't sleep if I went to bed. I am too anxious to know how the poor boy is. He is such a dear fellow!' and again the tears filled her eyes. 'Don't let me keep you in here,' she continued, after a few moments' silence. 'I know you want to smoke.'

'Well, I might have a cigar outside,' said Mr. Calthorp. 'It is a lovely night.'

It was indeed. The earth lay sleeping under the light of the full June moon; the fields and garden and flowers were veiled by a transparent shimmer of dew. Gerald Calthorp's feet turned involuntarily away from the gravel to the soft grass as he lit his cigar.

He was strolling across the lawn, when from under the shade of the tulip-tree there advanced to meet him a slight form, which had been crouched on the seat under the tree.

'Nina, child, what on earth are you doing out here? You will catch your death of cold.'

He would have passed his arm round her; but as he saw her face pale in the moonlight, he refrained.

She looked the ghost of the dainty vision she had been that afternoon. Her dress was crushed, its yellow roses faded, her hair rough and disordered round the wan face, with its large miserable eyes.

A terrible two hours had been Nina's since she had learnt of Sidney's danger—a two hours of keen reproach, misery, well-nigh despair. If she had acted differently when Sidney had told her of his love, she might have been blamed by the world, have been called 'flirt' and 'jilt,' nay, might have acted dishonourably; but she would have been Sidney Ansdell's promised wife, would have had the right to go to him, the right to be glad if he lived, to mourn if he died.

As it was, she had no right; he was nothing to her, less than nothing; she was engaged to another man.

That at least should not continue; she would not remain false in her soul both to Sidney and Mr. Calthorp, knowing as she did

the mere memory of the former would be more to her than Gerald could ever be. The shock and grief had made her bold to do the right. Sidney Ansdell might be dead even now; if he lived he might never again offer her the love she had refused; but whether he lived or died, whether he loved her or not, she would be free to think of him and to love him without sin.

So she stood and faced Mr. Calthorp in the moonlight, white and ashamed and sorry for him, but brave to do the right.

'Gerald.'

'What is it, dear?'

It was very difficult to speak, more difficult than she had thought it would be.

'I want to tell you something,' she said at last. 'We can't be engaged. I have found out—'

'What do you mean?' Mr. Calthorp asked almost fiercely. 'Are you playing with me?'

'No. O Gerald,' she said wildly, 'don't be angry with me! I have treated you very badly; but I can't love you, I can't!'

'When did you find this out?' asked Mr. Calthorp coldly.

'I thought,'—she was choking with strangled sobs,—'I thought I cared for you; then when I found I did not, I resolved you should never know it. I thought I should learn to—to love you, but now I know—'

'I don't understand it, Nina. What have I done? I will not be made a fool of, even by you.'

'O, forgive me,' she said humbly. 'But I cannot, I cannot; it would be wrong both to you and myself.'

She looked so fair, standing in the moonlight, her face upraised to his, every delicate line and curve of her slender figure, that her dress showed, soft yet clear in the tender radiance. Mr. Calthorp was seized by a sharp regret; he would

not lose her for a fancy born of a girl's tired brain.

'You are excited,' he said, — 'overwrought. This has been such a long trying day. Do not talk more to-night, dear. I cannot give you up so easily; to-morrow you may see things differently.'

'No, no!' she cried passionately, 'I cannot sleep till I am free; I cannot feel the chain tightening. You have been very good, too good, to me; but I cannot bear it, because—because—I care for another man.'

She had done it; her pale face was crimson with shame, and yet her heart was proud. She could pray now for Sidney's life, and she had felt she could not before.

Mr. Calthorp was a gentleman; he understood then that his case was hopeless, and he said no more. Cicely had judged rightly in thinking he was not a man to be satisfied with a divided allegiance.

'That is enough,' he said painfully at last, and he held out his hand to Nina. She took it humbly, and he felt a great tear fall on it; then they went back in silence to the house.

CHAPTER VI.

'WHERE are you going, Nina?'

'To the seat at the end of the island, mamma. I have such a headache, I don't think I could stand the *Walküren Ritt*. Tom will keep you company.'

'Don't stay away too long. You really are not very sociable as a companion, Nina,' said Mrs. Carlyle.

It was August, and Nina was staying with her mother and school-boy brother at Kreuznach. Two months had passed since Miss Carlyle had told Mr. Calthorp she could never be his wife, and

the time had gone by very heavily with the poor girl. Her mother was vexed at the untoward end of Nina's engagement, and, though not unkind, showed but little sympathy with her daughter, or desire to understand her feelings.

Nina was not looking well; her face was thinner, her laugh less bright, than they were used to be, and there were dark circles round her eyes. The secret pain she had borne of late had not been small; for some time Sidney Ansdell's recovery had been considered doubtful, and poor Nina in London, craving for news of him, had had to rest content with such scraps of information as she could gather from Cicely's letters.

These were small; for not even to her sister had Nina told of the morning under the ash-tree, or of the love that had been born too late in her own heart. She felt as though it would have been sacrilege to do so.

At the end of July Mrs. Carlyle had, according to her usual custom, departed for Germany with Nina and Tom, aged fifteen, a Rugby boy, who hated 'foreign parts,' and made his sister's life a burden to her by teasing her and stigmatising their German trip as 'beastly rot, leaving England for a place where there isn't a thing for a fellow to do.'

Since Nina had left London she had heard nothing of Sidney; but this was not of so much importance, as she had heard beforehand that he was now considered convalescent. She wondered whether—She longed to be back with Cicely at Farley, and then was angry with herself for harbouring such a wish.

She did not think Sidney would ever come back to her; she did not deserve he should, she thought to herself this evening, as, leaving her mother and Tom seated under

the verandah of the Kurhaus, with coffee before them, and listening to the band, she turned away down a narrow path of the gardens, just as the band commenced the *Walküren Ritt* with that long hiss from the strings.

She wandered along under the green gloom of the acacias, till she reached the end of the long walk which leads to the Elizabeth well. This part of the gardens was quite deserted now in the August twilight; every one was listening to the band, or strolling up and down under the wide colonnade, where the lamps were already lit. Nina ascended the stone steps at the side of the well, and found herself in her favourite haunt, the end of the 'bath island,' which is paved and railed and turned into a quaint little pier, high above the river, and overshadowed behind by the interlaced acacia-boughs.

Here Nina seated herself, glad of the solitude and the silence, only broken by the ceaseless, ever-varying, yet never-changing murmur of the river, which flowed below, glassing and shivering as the breeze swept over it, and darkening into gray shadows in the evening dimness.

Beyond and around and above rose the hills in their strength, and in the dark-blue sky one faint star cast a long trembling ripple of light through the depths of the shadowy river.

It was all so great and calm and eternal—the strong hills, the wide sky, the river flowing ceaselessly; a strange contrast, Nina felt, to the gardens, where the cool green shade was desecrated by gaslight; and a band, the delicacy of its tone greatly destroyed by constant playing in the open air, was swinging forth, by this time, some noisy polka. Nina felt refreshed; and yet as though Nature's great quiet re-

buked her for being what she was, a weak, frivolous, unstable, passion-tossed girl.

If she could only be calmer, less swayed by impulse, more self-reliant and self-contained! She tried to take to herself the lesson of Matthew Arnold's lines:

'Wouldst thou be as these are, live as they.'

Ah, but she could not; even now all her happiness or unhappiness was in the power of another person, one who was far from her, who by this time might have forgotten all about her.

There was a sound behind her—some one coming up the pier—a light springing step, certainly not belonging to any Teuton who was ever born. She turned round, half expecting to see her graceless brother, and beheld—Sidney Ansdell.

'You!'

'You!'

He had taken both her hands, and was looking at her with that strange force in his gaze which had once made her shrink; but now her eyes met the passionate look fully and simply.

'How did you come here?' she said, as naturally as she could, with her heart beating at twice its usual rate.

'I only arrived to-day,' he answered. 'I slept the night at Bingen; I meant to look you up to-morrow;' then he seemed to remember that he still held her hands in his own, and released them slowly.

They stood by the railing of the pier, looking away at the hills, not at each other now.

'What a pretty place it is!' said Sidney, with much originality.

'Yes,' answered Nina. 'How did you leave them at Farley?'

'O, pretty well.'

'Did they know you were coming here?'

'Yes.'

A few more questions and answers of equal interest and import, then Nina said gaily,

'But what in faith make you in Kreuznach? And then could have bitten out her tongue for having asked the question.

'I do not know if I were wise to come,' he answered gravely.

There was no rejoinder. He went on:

'Nina, I came because you were here. You reproached me once for telling you what you must have known without words. I am half afraid to speak again, and yet I must. I have been hoping and fearing and dreading ever since I heard—longing to put my fate to the touch, all this time. Nina, now you are free, may I tell you I love you? Will you send me away or—?'

He leant a little forward to see her face in the growing dusk; there was no anger in her eyes, only a lovely shame, a most sweet humility. She bent towards him, somewhat as a flower bends in the breeze, and in a moment he held her in his arms.

For a little time they were both in a trance, as they stood together in the summer twilight, hushed by the calm of coming night; watching the darkness deepen on the hills, and the moon rise like a fire, growing chaster and fairer as she mounted farther above the earth.

'Sidney,' said Nina at length, 'you wanted to quote some poetry to me once, and I would not listen. I think I should like to hear it now.'

Her hand rested in her lover's as he repeated:

"My bride,
My wife, my life, O, we will walk this
world,
Yoked in all exercise of noble end;
And so through those dark gates across
the wild
That no man knows. Indeed I love thee:
come,
Yield thyself up; my hopes and thine
are one:
Accomplish thou my manhood and thy-
self;
Lay thy sweet hands in mine, and trust to
me."

She turned to him, the sweetness of a woman's life-love in her eyes.

'I do,' she said, in a low voice. 'O my dear, thank God that you love me—that I am so happy!'

CHEAP HOLIDAY JOYS.

By W. W. FENN,

AUTHOR OF 'HALF-HOURS OF BLIND MAN'S HOLIDAY,' ETC.

WHITE cliffs, gray rock, brown sand, green sea, the blue unclouded overhead, and a warm sun animating the whole with palpitating light.

What picture more alluring? what contrast more striking for the toiler of the town to contemplate after a long imprisonment amidst the chimney-pots and noisy streets? One would think it could only be the colour-blind who could fail to regard with reverence and delight this simple but gorgeous palette which that great artist, Nature, daily sets by the marge of summer seas for our delectation; and yet how many worthy folk there are who, through sheer fatuity and having no unlucky physical defect, go down to the sea in trains, and, whilst occupying their holidays by great waters, entirely overlook not only this brush-work of Nature's cunning and eternal hand, but almost all the beauties she has to show, artistic or otherwise—her drawing, light and shade, colour, everything,—who in short have no eyes, and know no more except from hearsay, as it were, that skies are blue and seas are green, than the apple-woman round the corner knows of algebra! The rainbow-like disposition of lovely hues perpetually spread before our gaze across the wide, wide world, if we will only see them, when the heavens are fair and winds are soft, should prove alone a very joy incarnate for the holiday-maker. If his nerves be a little shaken, and he desire rest and tranquillity after the rush and turmoil of his daily life, and wishes to shake from off his feet the dust

for ever rising from the grindstone of town toil, he not unfrequently, by the advice of his doctor or at the suggestion of a friend, seeks out some quiet nook upon the coast free from the bands and buzz of the fashionable watering-place. So far wise, however, he more often than not stops short in his wisdom, and fails from very fecklessness to avail himself of all the pleasure within his reach, nay, fails to extract any delight whatsoever from the retirement and simplicity of the life which was to do so much for his health; and all because he will not use his eyes. Having no definite hobby to exercise, he begins to get bored by the end of a week, or sooner. Doing nothing very naturally he finds does not suit his energetic temperament; so he tries fishing at the urgent solicitations of the loafing boatmen of the beach; but the 'take' not being great, and the brisk breeze which will be sure to spring up every afternoon from the westward having started certain qualms not altogether of conscience, he abandons this with other equally purposeless methods of killing time. The long walk over the downs and the visit to the neighbouring ruined castle end merely in excessive fatigue, with the verdict 'all barren.' The home affections or family ties, when circumscribed within the narrow limits of the lodging-house, improvised out of the labourer's or fisherman's cottage, fail to afford that consolation during the roughly served meal or wet afternoon which a man with his heart in the right place might fairly expect. Penned

up in such close quarters with nothing to do, the post once a day, and yesterday's newspaper, indifferent fare, with great scarcity of vegetables, not a single cultivated human being to speak to, and a general deadly liveliness hanging about the place—bah! what wonder that the man without a hobby and blind to the glories of sea and sky votes retirement a mistake, and seclusion humbug!

Never again, he declares, shall he be caught in such a trap! It may be all very well for the poet, or the artist, or the fellow who has 'resources within himself,' as it is called; but *he* has none of these qualifications. No; and what is worse, he sets his face against any attempt to cultivate them. Now this may be all very well, and he may get on to a certain point in life, and not feel the want of them; but let him beware! Sooner or later the time will come when limbs get less lissom, the mind less elastic, when energy subsides, and when the health generally, without perhaps being entirely shattered, is far from what it was, and the stern edict goes forth that complete rest and quiet are absolutely indispensable if he would retain the remnant of nervous energy still left to him. When this time comes, I say, as come it does to most whose heyday of existence is passed in a perpetual feverish rush after the mere glitter and gauds of life, wealth, notoriety, position, and the like, then he will find that it would be well if he had given some regard to that diviner essence which exists in every nature, but which can alone be fanned into a flame by thought and culture. No need is there, even if it were possible, for us all to be poets or artists; but surely it is well to cultivate the ability of which none of us is entirely devoid, latent though it may be, for extracting some pleasure

out of the mere contemplation of the beauties of Nature. Surely, too, when it is remembered that this pleasure is a growing one, 'making the meat it feeds on,' and that it is the very cheapest that can be indulged in, it is unwise blindly to reject it as 'slow' and uninteresting. Natural scenery, when once a love for it is engendered, has a beneficent influence on the mind of man, bringing him as it does more directly than by any other means face to face with the Creator of all things. Imperceptibly, whilst regarding a beautiful prospect or lounging amid shady dells and nooks, or lying prone

'High upon a windy bluff
Above a wilderness of waves,'

his soul gets lifted for a time from the murky slough of colourless sordid ugliness in which (especially if he be an average Londoner) it is probably steeped for ten or eleven months out of the twelve. Without plunging deeply into botanical, geological, or meteorological lore, it is quite competent for him to wake himself up to the wonders and beauties of herbage, trees, rocks, seas, and skies; and if he should (once a little alive to these things) be induced to pursue the matter further, so much the better; but what I mainly insist on here is, that the denizen of the town, when out for a holiday, should strive to obtain some refreshment from a mere superficial survey of the country. He will acknowledge probably that he at least derives a certain sort of gratification on beholding a snow mountain for the first time; that something like a feeling of awe overtakes him on traversing one of the gloomy gorges of an Alpine pass; he will plead guilty to something approaching wonder at the solemnity and grandeur of a sunrise as viewed from the Righi; but these are great and impressive

facts which can hardly fail to create a species of emotion in the dullest and vulgarest minds, and moreover they do not come readily within the reach of us all when we require change, relaxation, and refreshment. Above and beyond this, they are costly pleasures; and the time and money necessarily expended on the most economical trip to Switzerland, or similar regions, is not at the command of everybody, whereas a threepenny ride on an omnibus to Hampstead Heath, or a two-shilling railway journey to some of the Surrey hills, comes within the means of well-nigh the poorest holiday-maker, and, landed upon some such come-atable spot, he should be able to reap infinite enjoyment from all by which he is surrounded. Has he but the wit and inclination, he should be able to extract from what he simply sees an inexhaustible fund of 'cheap holiday joys'—not very exciting perhaps, but eminently healthful, and certainly most lasting in their character. Let him but strive to treat with some reverence and observation the simplest fact before him, above, below, on either side, and he will find in the commonest hedgerow, the crumbling sand-bank, the pool of weedy water, the emerald turf, the blooming gorse and heather, the bowing trees, the purple stretch of open distance, with the cloud and sunshine chasing each other across it, and in the blue vault above him, more than enough to hold him pleasantly engaged for a far longer time than he will expect. Minutes and hours will slip by with strange rapidity when he has once striven to get interested by merely gazing. Besides, without some such preparation as this, some such training of the eye and mind in the enjoyment of Nature, without an effort to teach himself by degrees to reap delight from

her common stores and from her more modest phases and moods, the spectacle she presents when beheld on her grandest scale must fall comparatively flat.

He who has not accustomed himself, I maintain, to look at her, so to speak, commonplace pictures, those which may be seen every day upon a suburban hill or upon the coast of Thanet, except as backgrounds to excursionising, picnicking, donkey-riding, and the rapid excitement of watering-place amusements, can only obtain a 'defeated joy' when an opportunity gives him the chance of wandering farther afield and of seeing the nobler compositions of which the great mother is capable. When this supreme artist covers her canvas with snow-clad Alps, stupendous cliffs, rocky defiles, mighty torrents, boundless plains and seas, vast valleys and the like, they take our breath away, and our minds are ill prepared to estimate the magnificence of the tableaux if we come plump upon them with eyes unused to regard reverently her limning when she deals with less ambitious subjects. Hence it is that after golden opportunities have been presented to them of witnessing such pictorial glories, scores of tourists return home half unconscious of what they have seen, and certainly in nowise impressed by it; come back bored by their travel, hardly remembering where they have been, and willing and anxious even to shake off the recollection that they have been away at all. The trip has cost a considerable sum of money, great fatigue has been undergone, and that which they ostensibly went to see has been accounted barren and uninteresting, and all because they have gone to it without the slightest love for Nature. The only moments they can recall with any satisfaction are probably those

when they had a particularly good dinner, or when at some large hotel they were thrown amongst a concourse of people equally blind with themselves to everything save the excitement of crowds and the scrimmage of travelling.

Indifferent to the beauty of the primrose in the hedgerow or the shell on the shore; deaf and blind to any such appeal as that which Tennyson makes in 'Maud,' when he says:

'See what a lovely shell,
Small and pure as a pearl,
Lying close to my foot,
Frail, but a work divine;
Made so fairly well,
With delicate spire and whorl;
How exquisitely minute,
A miracle of design!'

—indifferent, I say, to any 'cheap joy' to be evolved from these small matters, and alike ignorant of any delight to be got out of the larger ones in the shape of clustering woods, waving cornfields, wind-swept downs, winding rivers, and the rest of the unpretentious country spectacles lying within a six-penny fare or so of all our homes, how can we be expected to estimate at anything like their proper value the sights we are called upon to admire when foreign travel opens up for us the wonders of the Alps?

I have said that, without being artist or poet, we may, nevertheless, bring ourselves if we choose into a frame of mind that shall be akin to that of the landscape painter and the maker of verse, and by so doing, not only become participants in the 'cheaper joys' of these lucky beings, but also creditable critics of their works. When once we have acquired the habit of scrutinising Nature, and have come to observe her with something more than the mere automatic and superficial glance, we shall be able to say who imitates her best, and who portrays her charms with the nicest accuracy. Above all, too,

we shall find such an increasing never-ending development of wonders lying one beneath another in her most commonplace scenes, that a vast and interminable field of unlooked-for enjoyment will open before us; an enjoyment which will never die, and which can defy the *ennui* and lassitude of ill health or advancing years; an enjoyment which is independent of strong limbs and sound wind, and which will turn compulsory imprisonment in the dulllest country quarters into a freedom and pleasure unsuspected and undreamt of in the days when we pinned our faith to the flesh-pots and the gauds of life. A practical acquaintance with the technique of the painter's or the poet's craft is not requisite for a full appreciation of the beauties of Nature. No one would attempt to suggest that to appreciate literature it is necessary to be a great author; and it is a platitude to say that to do so we must be able to read, and that we must have cultivated our taste, or have been taught or have educated ourselves to distinguish power with the pen from incapacity. Equally it would not be contended that unless we can paint skies, trees, and fields we cannot realise their glories when we see them in Nature; but I do contend that unless we look at them with something like reverence, and learn to study their beauties somewhat in detail, unless, in short, we learn to read them aright, we are incapable of loving a landscape either in art or nature. It is all very well for Lord Beaconsfield to say, with that sly sarcasm for which he is distinguished, that 'the critics are the men who have failed in literature and art;' but were there no exceptions to this dictum—true to some extent perhaps—we should have very few perfectly selected private libraries or anything approaching large and thoroughly catholic pri-

vate collections of pictures; for the former, in the majority of cases, are made by people who never write anything more important than their letters, and the latter by those who never held a brush or pencil in their lives. I am not speaking of those persons who affect to covet rare books and admire works of art because it is 'the right thing to have these sort of tastes, you know!' and who, handing themselves over in the matter to the bookseller and the dealers, suppose that they add to their social distinction by purchasing with their enormous surplus funds high-priced pictures (which they do not understand or really care for) in the same way as they might lay down pipes of old port-wine which they cannot drink. No, I point to people who are stirred by genuine admiration for the truths and beauties contained in the library or picture-gallery, and which they have come to understand and recognise through study and education.

Now, to lay down a hard-and-fast rule by which a man may teach himself to learn to look with admiration at the beauties of a natural landscape or its component parts, and to learn to extract from merely dwelling on them a definite and substantial pleasure, is not easy. The process by which he may satisfactorily avail himself of such 'cheap holiday joys' is not like making a pudding. We cannot give a recipe for it and put it into cookery-book phraseology, it is too subtle for that; for of it we might sing as Bassanio does of *Fancy*, and ask if 'tis bred in the heart or in the head;' and we should be quite right in adopting the answer in the song, and say 'it is engendered in the eyes, with gazing fed.'

After all a man can but *learn to look*—to look reverently and intel-

ligently, with the belief that if he will do so there is a great deal to see, a great deal to reward him for a very little concentration of thought. If he will do this, I say he may be sure that he is on the right road; and if he desire to be pleasantly put in the way of looking, he can adopt no better plan, to begin with, than that of scraping the acquaintance of some landscape painter, and of going forth with him when he sets up his sketching apparatus in the field. Let him, then, get the brother of the brush to give him a lesson, not in the manipulation of the materials, but in the faculty of observing. Let him watch the progress of the sketch or picture, comparing it bit by bit with the scene or object in Nature, and I will wager that he shall be astounded, if the artist be skilful, at the revelations which are then made, astounded at the infinite multitude of matters existing straight in front of him, and of which he had never dreamt in his limited philosophy. After a patient hour or so thus spent, he will say, I think, that he had no conception there was so much to look at. It signifies little whether it be 'on hill, in dale, forest, or mead; by paved fountain or by rushy brook, or on the beached margent of the sea;' he will candidly confess to having opened a page of a book which had hitherto been sealed to him. Thenceforth he will no longer surely pass over with indifference even the humblest details of country sights. He will have acquired at least some insight into the mysteries and beauties by which he is surrounded; and if the man have anything like a soul above buttons within him, he will reap pleasure at all times from looking at them. He has only to go on fostering and encouraging the habit, and each minute, each hour of the most unpromising holiday, will

yield resources which are undying and inexhaustible: should the faculty of observing thus obtained by sitting at the painter's elbow lure him on to an effort to acquire, however remotely, some kindred skill with brush or pencil, it will of course immensely aid him in the cultivation of his newly gained power. For one cannot sit down in front of any scene or object with the intention of trying to draw it without being obliged to look at it attentively; therefore, I hold that of all the inexpensive hobbies which a man may take up to while away his time, withal pleasantly and profitably, there is none to compare with that of sketching from Nature. No matter how humble or unsuccessful, as judged from the artist's point of view, his efforts may be, they will create in him so reverent a respect for the great mother, that it will compensate him amply for all he fails to do pictorially. Truly it may be said, perhaps, that the artist, like the poet, must be born and cannot be made; but what I am contending for now is that, without any hope or wish to measure one's strength with the professors of painting or poetry, we may most of us (if we choose) become imbued to some considerable extent with their love for Nature. We can at least train our eyes to see, and though we should never paint even the ghost of a picture in words or in colours, we may teach ourselves to recognise in what lies before us upon a hill-side or river-bank more than subject matter enough to yield numberless 'cheap holiday joys.' The most ordinary country walk along the most ordinary highway will thus become invested with an interest entirely outside the mere exhilaration which the exercise and fresh air inspire. If we can get into the habit of looking out for the picturesque, we shall see it on

a thousand occasions in a thousand trifling instances; gleams of light and colour, accidental effects of shadow from cloud or foliage, objects of the most commonplace character, will all be turned into raree-shows when regarded by the new-born intelligence in our eyes.

I have said nothing of the kindred faculty of listening, because in point of fact the reasoning which applies to the eye applies equally to the ear. Many people are as deaf to the music of country sounds as they are blind to country sights; yet if they can be brought to believe that there is just as much to hear as there is to see, they will not be disappointed. They will find that the hedge-rows, copses, commons, coasts, will all on occasions 'discourse most excellent music' if they will but wake themselves up to attend to 'the stops.' As a rule they know that birds sing, that winds whistle, and that waters gurgle and lap, precisely as they know the sky is blue and the grass is green, more from hearsay, as I have said, than from any personal knowledge of the facts. Here again they miss, of course, a mass of inexpensive pleasures entirely from the want of a mind educated and attuned in harmony with such commonplace melodies.

'The isle is full of noises,
Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight
and hurt not;'

and, it may be added, cost nothing. What way, then, more rational can we hit upon for enjoying a summer concert in the open air than that of listening to the music of running waters, of the Æolian harp-like melodies of soft zephyrs playing among the high tree-tops, with the accompanying chorus of the woodland songsters? Wherever there is something to look at, there is nearly sure to be something to listen to, in the country. Not to

quote such obviously delicious sounds as the distant chimes from the village church-tower borne upon the breeze across meadow or lake—the clinking of the blacksmith's hammer on the forge—the tinkling sheep-bells and bleating of the flock straying over common or down, and the ripples and splash of 'a summer sea asleep upon a sandy shore;' not to depend, I repeat, upon these palpable pleasures of the ear, we should be able if smoke-dried and toil-worn to gain benefit and rest even from the very silence of the country, or at least from such sounds as make

'Deep silence in the heart
For Thought to do her part.'

With ears and eyes, then, once put to their proper use, and called upon to do their full duty to our hearts and brains—that duty which Heaven expects every intelligent being to put all his senses to, and not forgetting either that he has nostrils wherewith to drink in the myriad odours rising from field and flower—we should hear no more of a month's holiday spent in seclusion and quiet being a bore and a mistake. Within the reach of all lies a sufficiency of 'cheap joys,' very potent in their ministrations for good, very curative in their immediate effects, and very lasting and increasing in the satisfaction they afford as time rolls on.

THE MESSAGE.

WAVE, wilt thou carry a message for me
Over the breast of the passionless sea ;
Hence, where the castle of Hastings frowns down,
To the happier regions of Folkestone town ?

Bear it, and quickly, by yonder bright way,
Which the sun has marked out with a joyous ray,
And give it to her whom thou deemest most fair
Of all the fair ladies thou findest there.

For there thou wilt find one divinely tall,
And though others are fair, yet far fairer than all ;
But wait till you find her alone by the sea
Ere you whisper the message you bear from me.

For I wish it not said midst a scented throng,
Like unheeded words of a drawing-room song ;
Nor shouted aloud for the crowd to hear,
Like some studied praise for a beauty's ear.

Say that, away in this ancient town,
By the desolate sea, on the windy down,
'Tis of her I am thinking, and memory
Recalls the fair form of her majesty ;

Say that, from every wave of the sea,
She rises like Venus, a goddess of glee ;
Say that I worship her, that I adore,
That I long for her here by this lonely shore ;

And ask her to give thee a message again,
One soft word of hope for my passionate pain ;
And I will remember the service to me
Which was done by the child of the passionless sea.

FIVE VALLEYS, OR OVER THE HILLS AND FAR AWAY.

Most holiday-takers have been to Switzerland; most of these have been to Zermatt; and all who go to Zermatt by the usual way, up the valley of the Visp, pass through Stalden, a handful of black wooden chalets, and a white sentinel-like church set down in picturesque disorder on a rocky mountain-side, at a sharp curve in the bridle-path. Once a rustic inn, with crimson carnations trailing from its rustic balconies, offered good food for the palette, if inferior for the palate, of the artist-traveller. But the Purple Grape has gone the way of many another bit of 'local colour,' and in its stead a large bar-rack-like 'hotel' has sprung up, inside which all the rest of Stalden might stand comfortably.

Perhaps not one in the hundreds that halt there for breath or luncheon, *en route* for Zermatt and the Matterhorn, so much as notice a deep narrow valley branching off here in another direction. It is called the valley of Saas; it is formed by the Visp rushing down from her source far away in the lake of Mattmark and the snows of the Monte Moro; and when the moon is up and hangs over the heights of the weird solitary-looking defile, you might fancy it the mouth of an enchanted valley in a fairy-tale, whither the adventurous go to seek, and, if younger sons, to find, their fortunes. 'Monte Moro;' the soft name seems to promise a romance. But even if you are an elder son, even if you are convinced that the part of birds of passage (tourists) is to spend

fortunes rather than to make them, this privilege being reserved for birds of prey (hotel-keepers), you can hardly do better, if inclined for a ten days' walking tour, than follow this track. From Stalden, up the valley of Saas, over, the Monte Moro to Macugnaga, and thence across country to the Italian lakes of Orta and Maggiore, is a route with three strong recommendations: it is not difficult, it is beautiful, and it is so little trodden that its beauty has not suffered at all as yet from the inroads of civilisation.

The valley of Saas, when we are in it, disenchant the adventure-seeker. It is not what *Murray* calls 'fertile in emotions,' except to total abstainers, whom the endless series of waterfalls can hardly fail to impress. It is sterile and dreary; but looking back we get pretty glimpses of the snow-peaks of the Rhone valley we are leaving behind. So much for Nature; for human nature you are thrown back on your guide. It is a mistake to say of these gentlemen that they have only one subject of conversation: the inexhaustible wealth of the English. As a rule they have two; and the distinction between Protestants and Catholics is the other. In vain you endeavour to impress on him that expense is sometimes an object, a great object, to an Englishman. He is lightly incredulous, which is provoking. However, if a Catholic, he is sure magnanimously to inform you that, in spite of his priest, he does not believe that all Protes-

tants are foredoomed to perdition.

Perhaps at starting you believed yourself surfeited with society and culture; but you are not sorry, after a four-hours *tête-à-tête* of this sort, when you come again upon their traces at Saas, though Saas is but a poor Alpine village, in a grassy dale watered in summer, and too often flooded in winter, by the broad Visp. If there is not much to be said about Saas, Saas has a great deal to say for itself, in the person of the innkeeper, whose fluent eloquence on the fascinations of the spot and the peculiar excellence of his inn excites misgivings in the mind of the experienced traveller. Mine host was servant for some years to an English family of rank, a distinction which, sad to say, seems to have turned his head—head of Swiss democrat though it be—on his democratic shoulders; and should his antecedents fail powerfully to impress you, he puts you down as a bad subject of Queen Victoria on the spot. Still it is worth while halting at Saas—and would be though at the risk of even shorter commons and a longer bill than the inn actually affords—just for the sake of a walk and a glacier view that, by itself, is almost worth coming from Stalden to see.

Cross the brawling Visp, by a plank-bridge as shaky as that trodden by Amina in the *Sonnambula*, and follow the path winding up the opposite heights, past thirteen of the rudest Calvary chapels imaginable, and skirting a slit of a valley, 'Fee' by name. Above is a little church, and here a startling view bursts suddenly upon you of snow-peaks in general, and the magnificent Allalin glacier in particular. The Allalinhorn above it is 13,000 feet high. Before you lies the glacier, huge, snow-white, filling the amphitheatre, whence

issues the tiny valley of Fee you are ascending. In the midst of the vast snowfield is a patch of pasture studded with chalets, like a green island in the midst of a polar sea. The *coup d'œil* is unsurpassably grand, and will rouse a thrill even in those most *blasés* in Alpine emotions. But when Fee has been seen and approved, should there be a couple of hours' daylight remaining, there is nothing to detain us from pushing on, over stony beds of dry torrents, up steep slopes of slate-rock to Mattmark, the next stoppage.

Mattmark consists of a lake and an inn. The lake is a singular one, sunk in a basin of rock and moraine. Its shores are a veritable flower-prairie, whose brilliancy more than redeems the desolation around. They are a garden of Alpine roses, saxifrages, campanulas, mountain pansies; an oasis in a rock-bound desert. Under the shelter of the mountain-banks stands the most unpromising-looking thing with four stone walls and a roof that ever introduced itself to us as an 'hotel;' and our countenances fall as we enter the dingy prison-like inn where now, *bon gré, mal gré*, pass the night we must. After a seven hours' walk from Stalden, our dinner to come assumes an importance in our hearts to which our lips would not willingly own, and our expectations, as we order it, do not incline to the brilliant side.

Most agreeably do we find ourselves mistaken. Hunger is the best cook no doubt, but that the landlady of Mattmark is one of the second best is also beyond dispute. Hand after hand in her *Strangers' Book* bears witness to this. Wayfarers have come in at the door, leaving all hope on the other side of it, and found such uncommonly good cheer as maketh glad the heart of man, especially at the altitude of 7000 feet above

the sea-level. Their gratitude has overflowed in effusive entries in the *Livre des Voyageurs*.

By starlight at five on the morrow we started for the top of the Monte Moro; and all those who wish to run a race with the sun (that impedes the march) and the morning clouds (that impede the view), and win it, had best not start later. The path, so called by courtesy, for it is indistinguishable, leads upwards through rocky avalanche-ridden defiles. If neglected by tourists, it is frequented by *contrabandisti*. No custom-house officers guard the frontier line between Switzerland and Italy amid the eternal snows of the Monte Moro. A friendly interchange in the commodities unequally taxed in the two countries is the result. Ten to one your guide is a smuggler, and is carrying over with him a pocketful of cheap Swiss salt, to bring back an equivalent in cheap Italian tobacco or wine.

The ascent is not in the least formidable, but just toilsome enough (part lying over slanting masses of snow) to induce a pleasurable self-complacency in 'moderate climbers,' when, after mounting for two hours and a half, they reach the top. The mysterious charm for which serious men endanger their serious lives—the charm of never-before-achieved or attempted ascents—becomes dimly comprehensible as we gaze on the fresh glories of the view from the Monte Moro. Our standpoint is over 9000 feet high, encompassed by snowy peaks several thousand feet higher. The spot might be a temple of the northern gods, Odin and Thor, and we feel like rash intruders in their council-chamber. Facing us immediately, surprisingly close, rise the peaks of Monte Rosa. During the whole of the ensuing four hours' descent the Queen of the Alps flaunts her

splendour upon us in a dazzling manner.

Facilis descensus Averni. Supposing the converse to hold good, Macugnaga should be a paradise; for toilsome in the extreme is the way down, save where a kindly avalanche has abridged it, filling a rocky ravine, and inviting you to descend by *glissades* in a few seconds a height that would take half an hour to climb. But soon we leave the last traces of snow behind us, and still we have to scramble for an unconsionable time over a trackless, treeless, sterile, stony mountain-side; and still Macugnaga, far beneath, looks like a toy village, a joke. But if there is no rest for the sole of your foot, you may rest your eyes by regarding the beauty, Monte Rosa, whose full face is turned towards you.

At her foot the straggling hamlets called Macugnaga lie among water-meadows at the head of the Val Anzasca, which here runs up—not a tree, but, so to speak, an Alp. Macugnaga has two very fair hotels, and is becoming a popular resort of Italian families in search of a mildly bracing climate. The English seldom linger long, but when they do the favour is duly appreciated. One night we were appalled by the sight of the village apparently in flames. We hastened to the scene of the conflagration, to find this was a bonfire in honour of some of our countrymen about to depart after a several weeks' stay. Macugnaga, indeed, is better suited for languid Italians than for restless Britons. On three sides it is hemmed in by mountains; and when you have scrambled up the Belvedere, a pine-clad hill on the skirts of Monte Rosa, and explored the Macugnaga glacier—a glacier on the verge of collapse, cracking, splitting, sinking together in every direction—you will find your choice of walks

lie between a mere stroll in the meadows, and an excursion in the 'higher Alps,' with guide, porter, rope, and axe.

But Macugnaga has prettiness of her own over and above the fine view—looking up, of Monte Rosa, and looking down, of the Val Anzasca. The white Hôtel Monte Moro—a capital house, by the way—stands negligently amid unenclosed fields of waving yellow rye. So sterilised is the soil by landslips and inundations that nothing better will grow here. The patches of ripe corn, the peasants coming and going 'thru' the rye,' vary the Alpine landscape pleasantly. But already the women and girls are at work on it with their sickles early and late. Rye-reaping by the light of an Alpine moon under the snows of Monte Rosa is a scene often to be witnessed here. Across the fields, against a background of beechwood, stands the church—a large church, raised on a stone platform. It is much frequented by the female population of the Val on Sundays and holidays, and affords then a curious sight. The interior is crowded with women and girls, their heads covered with thick nunlike white veils, embroidered in the corner. The men do not enter the body of the church, but congregate on the threshold and the steps outside leading up to the entrance-doors. These, when the service is over, are thrown open, disclosing the worshippers kneeling on the staircase, with the mountain landscape in the background. A procession round the church, bearing banners, and chanting prayers for rain or fine weather, as the crops may require, concludes the ceremony.

Close by is the priest's white cottage dwelling, in a garden stocked with useful herbs, bright flowers and bees, where his reverence may be seen walking in the

early morning reading his breviary. He is something of a naturalist, and owns a large collection made by his own hands of the butterflies, beetles, and so forth of the valley. Many rarities in England are common here. Besides golden 'fritillaries' of all sorts and swarms of 'painted ladies' and 'clouded yellows,' 'swallow-tails' and 'Camberwell beauties' abound here; but the king of them all is the splendid Apollo butterfly, with its white, black-veined, crimson-spotted wings, a doubtful native of our own shores, but of which you may see a dozen specimens flying about at a time in this mountain valley.

The beech-woods bordering the noisy Anzasca stream are a pleasant resort, and would be much pleasanter if the mosquitoes were not of our mind on this point, and determined to share the haunt with us. If any one thinks he knows what bilberries are, or may be, let him come hither and be undeceived. The size, quantity, and flavour of those that cover these mountain-sides are extraordinary. Some years since an enterprising speculator bethought him that this might be turned to account. He had the fruit gathered, and distilled thence a liqueur which he sold at five francs a bottle, and which found such favour that he speedily made his fortune and retired from the 'business.' No one has taken up his happy thought, and bushels and bushels of this excellent wild fruit moulder away annually. The Anzasicans are too poor to buy sugar for preserving. Theirs is a hard life, a hard struggle for bare existence. Bread is their staple food; it is only baked twice a year, so its consistency may be imagined, not described. It is kept on the housetops, turned every day, and when required for consumption has to be broken with a hammer. A very little of it natu-

rally is expected to go a long way.

The Anzascons are not of purely Italian origin; their dialect is a mixture of German and Italian. Migrations, in ages past, have taken place from the Valais *vid* the Monte Moro pass. Among the meadows at Macugnaga is an old church, only opened now on bright and particular occasions, whose style of architecture, unlike anything we are accustomed to see on this side of the Alps, speaks for itself. It is distinctly Gothic, and not Italian Gothic; the tracery and mouldings of the windows and doorways are quite of a Northern character. The building is of the sixteenth century, and the campanile standing by is a later addition. Outside is an enormous lime-tree of fabulous age, and at least twenty-four feet in girth. It is a patriarch indeed; and there is only one other of its tribe in the Val Anzasca.

There is little remunerative labour for the peasants here. The field-work, such as it is, the peasants undertake. So the men, if wise, emigrate; if lucky, make their fortunes, and then often return to their native valley, and build houses in which they live, presumably very happily, till they die, houses whose neat, bright, Sunday-best appearance contrasts forcibly with the battered workaday chalets of the less fortunate.

The walk from Macugnaga down the Val Anzasca is anything but barren in 'emotions.' In an hour we reach Pestarena, famous since the Romans' time for its gold-mines, a brilliant-sounding word that raises brilliant expectations. But at the first glimpse of the 'works,' the dilapidated sheds and outhouses huddled together on the banks of the Anzasca, and the tattered, listless, sorry-looking miners themselves, the Dorado of

our fancy vanishes at once, and we scarcely need to be told that the yield of ore is now so small as barely to repay the working expenses of the gold-mines of Pestarena.

The descent of all these Alpine valleys offers the same transformation scene from the sternness and sterility of the upper zone to the smilingly fertile regions below; but the pleasure of it loses nothing by repetition. From the 'wilderness and the solitary place,' a waste broken only by gloomy firs, stunted shrubs, and shapeless masses of rock, we walk out, to find ourselves in a garden of Eden before we have gone many miles downhill. First Spanish chestnuts meet us, then walnut-trees, maize, figs, vines at last. Each valley, too, has its own individual features. Pretty little villages peep out of the hill-sides of the lower part of the Val Anzasca; and on feast-days the distinct costume of the inhabitants may be studied to advantage. A wayside chapel that we pass, small, but of high reputation, offers on such occasions a characteristic spectacle. It is the local custom to combine a special service with not a little special shopping; and high mass in church generally means a fair in the churchyard. It is the Madonna's birthday; from up and down the valley gentle and simple come flocking to the miracle chapel, round which booths are erected to-day, and a brisk trade in cotton umbrellas, handkerchiefs, sweets, and fruit is going on under the shade of a spreading lime-tree, fellow to the giant at Macugnaga. The peasants will tell you that the latter is the male and this one the female plant. However this may be, Adam and Eve stand thus parted, out of sight, though perhaps mournfully dreaming of one another, like the pine-tree and

the palm-tree in Heine's little poem.

At Ponte Grande, an ineffably picturesque and ineffably dirty-looking village, four hours' walk from Macugnaga, we take leave of the Val Anzasca. Crossing the big stone bridge that gives its name to the place, we follow a high-road winding up the opposite heights, a high-road that looks as if it ought to lead to Milan at least, so imposing is its appearance. And an imposition in a sense it proves. Bannio, to which it conducts in ten minutes, and which for some inscrutable municipal reason is dignified with such an approach and with big letters on the map, is the most modest and unassuming townlet. Italian, *Italianissimo* in looks, it lies *perdu* in a tangle of vines and figs and chestnuts; and in spite of its three large white churches, as big as the rest of the place put together, one would suppose it of no consequence in the world except to the tourist going over the Col di Barranca, who will find it his best halting-place. Fearlessly may he enter the quaint-looking Osteria del Rampo, in an alley like a crevasse, so narrow that you might shake hands out of the window with your neighbour over the way. In this hospitable little inn the stranger will find entertainment of the 'good old' sort. It is held by a mother and daughter; the *signora* is a capital cook, the *signorina* a Hebe of a serving-maid; the dining-room is adorned with portraits of Hebe's ancestors in sixteenth-century costume, and overlooks a tangled garden, a favourite lounge of the *élite* of Bannio. Man wants but little, up here, in the way of recreation. That little is everywhere the same: a game at bowls; though that he wants it long cannot be denied. The livelong day they are at it, nor seem to desire anything

beyond. Women and children want even less; they are content with looking on.

From Bannio up the Val Olloccio, over the Col di Barranca to Fobello in the Val Mastalone, is a six hours' walk. The path leads gently upwards, past hamlets and farmlets, rich pastures and chestnut-woods, Swiss and Italian features mingling in the scenery. Your guide will stop you at a certain village, to draw your attention to a certain house that has won an immortality of fame as the convalescent resort of a certain bishop! The illustrious visit is recorded on the walls for the admiration of existing and future generations. But the attractions of the Val Olloccio are, on the whole, of a cheering rather than inebriating character, until, having once more left the regions of vegetation below us, we mount a steep grassy slope and reach the Col, which affords a splendid view of the mountains of the Simplon range and the Val Anzasca. Hence, onwards, we are tempted to wish the Barranca pass was more frequented, as then the track might be traceable. At present its vagueness renders a guide desirable for travellers unendowed with the instincts of a carrier-pigeon. As we scramble down, the face of the country changes entirely. Swiss valleys are mostly alike, their main features cut out on one pattern, and history, natural history, repeats itself. There Nature, like man, seems deficient in imagination. Italian valleys differ as musical instruments differ; as violins differ from flutes, flutes from horns. Grand and wild is the tone of the Val Mastalone we are entering, with its purple hills, forest-clad declivities, and rich colouring. We are further than ever from plains and cities; but there is nothing dreary about such isolation as this: it is

the splendid isolation of a monarch or a god.

Fobello is a very small post-town crowded into a picturesque gorge. The striking and curious costume here worn by the women is more remarkable than anything of the kind surviving in Italy; it is almost Oriental in effect. The first sight that greeted us on entering the inn at Fobello was that of two gorgeous dames seated at supper. One of them wore a blue open jacket over a red low bodice with gold buttons, open over a white lace-fringed shirt. Her short petticoat, blue with a broad red border, reached to the knee, displaying her loose blue-cloth trousers, embroidered round the bottom. No shoes, but leathern sandals with blue latches. A scarlet handkerchief rolled turban-wise round her head, and large gold earrings, completed her toilette. Her companion's differed only in the colours. The lady in question was a Fobellese, married to a hotel-keeper at Turin; and whilst on a visit to her native country had donned her native costume, affording us a more brilliant specimen than might otherwise be met with except on Sundays and saints' days. Still, every peasantess you meet carrying loads of hay up and down the mountain-sides here is accoutred in somewhat similar fashion.

'Magnificent,' is the one word that describes the Val Mastalone. The vegetation, though of a mountain character, is extremely rich, a delicious contrast to Swiss valleys such as Saas, where, when you have said pine-trees and a strawberry or two, you have summed up the vegetable kingdom. At a short distance from Fobello, on the road to Varallo, ten miles off, the Val Mastalone divides; and the branch we must follow to reach our fifth valley, the Val di Strona, leads us again into the heart of the mountains. This footpath, if you

follow it long enough, will bring you to Omegna, on the Lake of Orta. The path is good, the scenery incomparable. To Omegna, however, is a matter of about twelve hours, and the little country inns on the way are of a primitive description. Still, if it be ever worth while to rough it for the sake of a glimpse of Nature's highest beauties, it is worth while here.

Leaving the road, we enter a narrow mountain valley, like a fissure in the rocks, and follow a winding stream of indescribable beauty. Its colour is the vividest green; its face changes at every turn, as it were the self-transformations of a fantastic water-sprite. Here it is a cascade, here a noisy brook, here a silent-flowing river, here it subsides into deep pools of marvellous intensity of colour. We leave it with regret, when presently our way leads us up a steep mountain-side clothed in fir and beech forest. Chiming bells resound mysteriously from above, telling of a human settlement before we approach it. This is Rimella, a tiny town perched like a falcon's nest in an inaccessible impregnable situation. There is an air of self-importance about Rimella, and no wonder, for it rejoices not only in a large church and a fair inn, but a Museum of Fine Art and Natural History! This last we regard with amazement, vainly speculating, as with the fly in amber, how ever it came there. The inhabitants are of foreign origin, like the Anzascons, and speak German, but the character of the place is thoroughly Italian.

Nothing could be more picturesque than the forms of the mountains here. On all sides rise cone-shaped purple hills, their pinnacles capped with neat white villages, each with its tall campanile.

Onwards and upwards we go, over steep pastures, to Alpine

wastes broken only by masses of purple monk's-hood, and before long reach the summit, the Col di Campello, with its famous and extensive panorama of distant mountain-ranges, and especially of the Monte Rosa group. Hence the descent is into Italy proper: the character of the scenery softens rapidly; one by one the Alpine features disappear. The first thing that meets our eyes is the village of Campello, and a strange sight it is, suggesting a story by Nathaniel Hawthorne or Edgar Poe. With its tall, gaunt, half-ruinous houses, steep broken alleys, it looks like a deserted village, or worse—some curse-stricken spot. It might be uninhabited but for a group of witch-like old women crouched on a staircase, spinning—too apathetic for even the sight of a tourist to excite their curiosity. Advice not to halt here is superfluous. At a glance the traveller feels convinced he may go farther but cannot fare worse. Indeed the place probably looks worse than it is. Dirt and exorbitant charges are the only dangers he could possibly encounter. Still he would probably choose to *coucher à la belle étoile* sooner than at forbidding, suspicious-looking Campello.

We now enter the Val di Strona, last but not least of our five valleys. The palm of beauty rests between it and the Val Mastalone. The latter is more grand and romantic; but exquisitely beautiful is this Val di Strona in another way. The vegetation is of incredible luxuriance. The creepers and ferns are of tropical exuberance of growth. For the botanist it is the happy valley *par excellence*. In ferns it is especially rich. The royal *Osmunda* grows here profusely and attains an enormous size. Gradually the villages become more frequent, more ornamental. At Massiola, two hours from Omegna, there is an Osteria that compares advantageously with the so-called 'hotel' at Fobello. Villas, gardens, and vineyards begin soon, and we feel with regret that this time we have indeed left the mountain solitudes far behind us. But on the other hand the land whose threshold we have passed, the land of the cypress and myrtle, 'where the flowers ever blossom, the beams ever shine,' is one that will not long allow us to regret anything, and soon we are content with the recollection merely of our 'Five Valleys.'

A HOLIDAY WISH.

WHERE green leaves let gold sunlight through ;
Where winds grow tender as they sigh ;
Where fleece of white on strand of blue
Is all of cloud and all of sky ;
Where bright things flit on brighter wing ;
Where young birds pause to rest and sing,
And glad and sweet is everything,—
You dream the hours away.

If I might hover like the gleam
Of that bright slanting ray, whose gold
Falls soft through shadow-light to beam
O'er brow and cheek and snowy fold ;
If I might kiss your dusky hair
From covert shade and hidden lair,
And feel your beauty everywhere
The livelong summer day,—

I should not envy bird or flower,
I should not know this aching pain
That lasts the length of every hour
And tells me love is all in vain,
That in your life I have no part,
That for my heart I gain no heart,
Though lips may sigh, though tears may start,
Though in despair I pray.

If I might be the silent page
That feels the lovelight of your eyes,
The record of some happier age
That fills your thoughts or wins your sighs ;
If so I might engross your mind,
And in your soft contentment find
One thought, one hope, one glance as kind,—
O sweet, what should I say ?

O tender winds, that kiss her hair ;
O birds, that sing your love-songs sweet ;
O page, of subtler power than mine,
That may her deep eyes hold and meet !
If you and I were more akin,
Which would her wayward fancy win,
If you might end and I begin
To woo her love to-day ?

RITA.



A HOLIDAY WISH.



LEAVES FROM A WALKING TOURIST'S DIARY.

From a heterogeneous collection of notes made during walking tours in many parts of the world, I have extracted the following as being of a sufficiently non-common-place character to interest such readers as prefer locomotion upon Nature's wheels to any other method. I would have it clearly understood that in no single case have I gone out of my way to seek adventures, but that what I relate is of such a nature as might happen to any one not much in the habit of wandering about strange places.

There are few stranger places in England than Romney Marsh, and there is certainly no tract of country of equal extent within such easy reach of the metropolis so thoroughly a *terra incognita*. Ardent archaeologists occasionally visit its quaint old villages, and potter about the grand old churches; trackers of the wily snipe and coursing farmers now and then terrify the heavy-woolled sheep with their guns and their dogs; but to the ordinary tourist Romney Marsh is much less known than the wildest districts of Northern Scotland.

Early in last year, I, weary of beaten tracks and hackneyed beauty-spots, resolved to explore this wild strange country. So I packed up my knapsack, and proceeded by train to Hythe. From Hythe I walked to Dymchurch, New Romney, and Lydd, at each of which places I halted, wandered about, sketched, and explored. So interesting were these strange old towns, with their broad grass-grown streets, their huge quaintly tower-

ed churches, their timbered houses, their quiet and their solitude, that I took but little note of the pace at which time was flying, and it was four o'clock by the time I left the Fleece Inn at Lydd and had commenced the eleven-mile walk across the marsh to Rye, my destination for the night. However, the weather was fair, there yet remained two hours of daylight by which to pursue my road, and, as I was utterly ignorant of the character of that road, my mind was at ease. So with pipe well alight I swung along at a good pace. I had already had some opportunity of gauging the character of the marsh folk, and the two bumps which I found generally conspicuous by their absence were those of amiability and locality, reading therefrom the lesson that I should trust entirely to myself and to fortune. One fact, however, I had elicited from my landlord at the Fleece, which was that, by following the road, Rye would be about sixteen miles off, but by cutting straight across the marsh, the distance would be lessened by six miles. Off I went, soft springy turf beneath my feet, clear blue sky above my head, the pleasant sounds of the lapwing's note and the tinkling of sheep-bells alone breaking the utter solitude. At first all seemed plain sailing. Straight ahead was my goal—the tower of Rye church, and all I had to do was to make for it. So passed a pleasant half-hour.

Gate-climbing became rather a monotonous pastime, but it had to be done, so I did not mind. Suddenly, without the slightest token,

I came upon a deep wide ditch. Very strange, I thought, as I was following a beaten path. A hundred yards to the right it was crossed by a bridge with a hurdle at each end. Over the bridge and the hurdles I went, and pursued my road. Over more fences, through more gates, then another ditch, this time a longish turn to the left to cross it. Gradually the beaten track seemed to disappear, whilst fences, gates, and ditches became annoyingly frequent. Try as I might, I could not keep Rye church straight ahead of me for five minutes together. One minute I was making straight for the sea, the next I was steering inland, varied now and then with very decidedly retrograde movements. An hour and a half passed, and I was beginning to feel somewhat tired of the monotony of the scene, and of climbing endless gates and fences, and of crossing numberless ditches. Not a hut, much less a house, could I see, and but half an hour of daylight remained. I had read of benighted travellers wandering about Salisbury Plain, I think, until they dropped from exhaustion. Surely what took place on Salisbury Plain might happen on Romney Marsh, and days after my emaciated frame might be discovered resting against a sheep-fence. However, I drove that nonsense away, lit a pipe, and looked at my position. Apparently the trees by Lydd church were as near as they were an hour back, and the tower of Rye as far. I went on. Then I spied a small group of buildings a quarter of a mile off. As I approached, the sight of smoke issuing from a chimney assured me that human beings were in existence somewhere. I knocked at the battered door and entered. A tall weird figure was washing itself at a bucket—I say ‘itself,’ because the keenest of eyes could

hardly have distinguished the sex : it looked up, and proceeded with its toilette.

‘Could you tell me the direct path to Rye?’ I asked, with humility, perhaps with fear, for I did not know what ‘it’ might not do if provoked by intrusion.

A rumble of sounds was the answer, and a second weird figure presented itself. Both looked at me and laughed.

This was absurd. Had I been in Central Africa I could not have been more thoroughly estranged. I made signs—no result. I spoke loudly, as one does to a foreigner—no satisfaction. So with—well, a blessing, I rushed out. Darkness was settling down upon the vast plain. Here was I, in the middle of Romney Marsh, without an inkling of the right road, unable to communicate with my fellow-countrymen, and clearly a good six miles from my destination. However, I went on. More ditches and gates and fences. Every fence had to be climbed, and gently too, for as a rule they were rickety; every gate had to be unbolted, carefully shut, and bolted again; and in no case did I strike the direct road over the ditches. Luckily the night was fine, the moon shone, and I could see the lights of Rye. But I had already walked some twelve or fourteen miles, taking gates, fences, and ditches into consideration; my knapsack felt heavy, my mouth was parched with thirst, and there was an incipient blister on one of my heels. The sudden idea struck me that by making straight for the sea I should gain either a main road or the sea-wall. I did not get near the sea, but I arrived at a huge ditch, upon the further side of which was a white high-road. It must have been nearly nine o'clock at night; but I was away from the hateful fences and ditches, so I

plunged into the ditch up to my armpits in filthy water, and got on to the road. The lights of Rye seemed to be nearer, and I strode on to keep off the chill. An hour later I met a coastguard-man. How I loved the sight of a civilised human being!

'Am I right for Rye?' said I.

'Rye!' said he; 'Lord bless you, sir, you're a-goin' away from Rye; Rye's behind you, and you're close on Lydd.'

'Lydd!' said I incredulously; 'but I've been coming from Lydd for the last five hours.'

'Did you come over the Marsh, sir?' asked the tar.

'Yes,' I answered, 'until I struck this road.'

'Then that's how you've done it,' said he: 'you've mistaken Lydd lights for Rye, and you've been walking in a circle.'

I couldn't help laughing; so I gave the honest blue-jacket a shilling, pushed on for Lydd, and passed the night there. I got to Rye the next day, but I did not pursue the Marsh road.

Some months later I arranged a week's walking tour in Normandy with an old friend. His professional duties prevented him from starting earlier than the end of October, whilst it was impossible for me to prolong my holiday later than the first week in November. So it was arranged that I should do a little walking on my own account for a fortnight, at the end of which I should meet my friend by the Southampton steamer at Havre. Nine o'clock at night was the hour named in the schedule, but any hour later up to midnight was named as being more probable by the wharf loafers, who pointed first at the black swift-speeding clouds overhead, and then at the tumbling waters of the harbour. At half-past eight I left Frascati's Hotel. It was a wild night, and

from the bottom of my heart I wished that my friend had postponed his arrival. An umbrella in the gale blowing was of about as much service as a paper bag; so I put on mackintosh overalls, took a thick stick, and trudged out in the pouring rain. By nine o'clock I was blown to the quay-side.

'How long will the Wolf be?' I asked of a drenched official in big boots and a big hat.

'But, see you,' said he, in reply, 'with this dog of a wind, she may be three or even four hours behind time.'

This was cheering, so I lit a pipe. I waited an hour under a customs shed; but the zinc roof leaked, and the wind blew in from all quarters; so I made for a cabaret close by, dedicated 'to the beautiful Haytian.' Here, at any rate, I thought, I can get shelter, something to drink, and be on the spot when the Wolf appears. I opened the little door and entered. The usual metal counter, the usual thin-lipped active-fingered lady in the box, the usual group of idlers sipping *petit bleu* or the perilous absinthe, the usual smell of stale dinners and government tobacco. I called for a *petit verre*.

'Would monsieur like to go in to the fire?' asked the thin-lipped one.

Monsieur would like very much, as he was very cold and very wet, and was ushered into a small inner room. There was a sort of a scuffle when I entered, and I saw some dozen evil-looking faces turned on me.

'Monsieur is but a traveller, and will not disturb you,' said the thin-lipped one to the faces; at which assurance quiet was restored.

To compound for the temporary inconvenience caused by my entrance, I ordered a couple of bottles of wine to be introduced. Then I perceived where I was, for cards

were pulled out, and the hubbub of voices recommenced. I sat in a corner, drying myself and watching the scene. At first matters went on prettysmoothly; money changed hands, but only in solitary pieces. From time to time fresh liquor was ordered in for those palates not to be soothed by ordinary wine, and by degrees the bad faces—for I had noticed that there was not a good face in the room—grew worse; tongues loosened, bigger stakes were won and lost, high words were bandied, fists were shaken, and in a very short space of time each man seemed to be transformed into a fiend. A big negro in front of me was apparently sweeping in the lion's share of winnings. No one could play against him, so that he became a common enemy, and every man's voice was raised against him. More than once a temporary panic was occasioned by the appearance at the door of the thin-lipped one imploring the gamblers to be quieter; but the noise, the blasphemy, the confusion increased as the brandy and *petit bleu* heated the veins, and the negro's luck continued. He had swept a pile of silver into his pocket with a hoarse chuckle, when suddenly a Greek sailor from the opposite side of the table jumped up, rushed round, and, seizing the negro by the throat, forced him back in his chair. It reminded me of the game Ah Sin did not understand, and the exposure thereat, in Bret Harte's poem. Duplicate aces and court cards were discovered hidden in his sleeves, in his waistcoat, and in his shoes. A scene ensued which baffles description. Every tongue roared and raved, every one demanded his losings back. The negro was pushed, pummelled, and knocked over; in the confusion chairs, bottles, and glasses were tumbled about, and I meditated instant escape.

The door opened, and the thin-lipped one shrieked into the room, 'Save yourselves; the police are here!'

There was a wild scramble for the loose coin on the table, and a general rush to the door was made. The cocked hats of the police were visible coming through the outer room, the lights were dashed out, and a regular row ensued. I managed to get behind the big negro, and, thanks to the darkness and confusion, escaped to the outer air. I found that the Wolf had not yet arrived; so I sauntered back as if unconscious of what had happened at the Belle Haitienne. I found that the house was in the custody of the police, who had long known it to be a notorious gambling-den. It was well that I escaped as I did; for had I been captured, I should assuredly have assisted the other blackguards in their performance of *travaux forcés*, notwithstanding my innocence.

Shanghai—the great foreign settlement in North China—offers but few attractions to the artist or the lover of beautiful Nature. The eye wanders over a vast plain, broken here and there by a pagoda or a grave-mound, but otherwise dull, flat, and uninteresting. There is not a thicket or a bit of woodland to gladden the sight, or the smallest hill to brace the muscles into anything like active exertion. To find cover for the pheasant, subjects for the pencil, or materials to stir the fancy and imagination, one must journey far inland along the creeks and canals, for three or four days. Then one may get a glimpse of hills, and of tolerably attractive scenery; and, although there is but little inducement to pedestrianism, find opportunity to escape from the monotonous confinement of the house-boat by a stretch on land. I was in this position some four or five years

ago. We had journeyed slowly and monotonously for five days, seeing nothing but the high banks of the creeks, occasionally diversified by a peep of flat green country, with nothing to break the monotony of the day but an occasional shot at a rabbit, or a tramp along the towing-path. At length we arrived at our promised land. We left the house-boat in the charge of the *lowdah* or captain, put some lunch in our knapsacks, and started for a day's stroll.

Any one who has travelled in China or Japan must have carried away very vivid recollections of the ferocity and annoying characteristics of the native pariah dogs. An instinct leads them to scent the European from afar; and even when on board a house-boat in mid-stream one can generally guess at the approach to a town or village by the incessant howling and barking of the dogs, who can smell long before they can see. Well, we had walked perhaps two hours, and had chosen rather a picturesque spot on the banks of a stream as a halting-place for tiffin. We had purposely avoided being near a village on account of the curiosity of the natives and the dogs, and there was nothing human near us, unless the ruins of an old temple, destroyed probably during the Taiping rebellion, can be called human. It was a beautiful day; we had enjoyed a good walk; a very tempting meal had been emptied from our three knapsacks and laid on the ground; we were alone and undisturbed under the shade of the quaint old ruined temple with its background of gently waving whispering bamboo, and felt at peace with all mankind. We fell to our viands with an appetite. Our clever Chinese cook had made an excellent salad, our bottled English ale was especially grateful, and the round of press-

ed beef unexceptionable. Between the mouthfuls we discoursed of the strangeness of our position. Three Europeans, or, more strictly speaking, two Europeans and an American, a hundred miles from the nearest white face, gazing on the strange scenery made familiar to us by the willow plate of youth. We were not sentimental—hunger and sentiment rarely run together; but we were wondering what on earth we could do if the natives should take the whim into their heads to attack us, when we became aware that a hungry-looking dog was feasting his eyes upon us and our food. We started him off, whereupon he barked as loud as he could bark.

'No more peace for us,' I remarked. And my words were immediately verified by the sound of a score of beasts barking in response to the warning sent out by our hungry friend. Nearer and nearer came the hideous noise; then we saw one head, then half a dozen heads, then the bodies, heads, tails, legs, and all, of quite five-and-twenty snarling barking brutes.

'Wall,' said our American, 'jest let 'em get in range and I'll give 'em what for,' drawing out a six-shooter and cocking it.

'They won't get within range,' I said; 'besides, if you were to shoot one, there would be the deuce and all to pay, for these beasts are sacred, and are protected by popular prejudice.'

'That's right,' answered the Yank, 'and I'm real sorry for popular prejudice; but I wouldn't give a cent for the life of one of those dogs if he should get within range.'

We did all we could to drive the brutes away. We hooted, we shouted, we made rushes at them, which had the effect of sending them scampering in all directions,

only to return with redoubled noise when we sat down again. Their barking had attracted the natives from a village not far off, and they came in crowds to see the rare spectacle of a 'white devils' feast.

So unbearable at length grew the annoyance, that my English companion seized a brick from an old tomb close by, and threw it with the precision and skill of an old cricketer into the throng of dogs. At the same time the American let fly his six barrels.

'By Jove,' I said, as I heard a fearful series of yells and saw three or four dogs kicking about in death-agonies, 'we're in for it now! You fellows have not only killed sacred animals, but you've done it with a sacred brick.'

'Sacred fiddlestick!' rejoined my English friend. 'Why, it's only a bit off this heap here.'

'Well,' I said, 'that heap once contained a man, and Chinamen are mighty punctilious about the tombs of their ancestors. Just look here!'

And I pointed to the crowd of rustics, who had joined their howls to those of the dogs and were closing upon us.

To show fight would have been madness on the part of three men against an infuriated rabble now amounting to perhaps three hundred; as none of us understood the language, argument and explanation could not be resorted to. There was nothing left to do but to give ourselves up to some soldiers who had been sent for from the village. We were conducted, amidst the jeers and execrations of the mob, to the house of the local mandarin, and there tied up until it should be his pleasure to see us. After waiting an hour, tied up as if we had been state malefactors, he condescended to order us to his hall of justice. The mandarin, who looked a good-humoured easy-living sort of

official, could speak but very little 'pidgin English'; but we made out our case somehow, and after much humming and hawing extracted from him consent to have our *lowdah* found and brought up as a witness for our complete innocence. Not for three or four hours, however, could he be found; and the mixture of joy on the poor fellow's face at seeing us alive, and concern at our position, was almost comical.

To cut a long story short, by the payment of taels all round to a very heavy tune we were allowed to go; but we remarked as we smoked our cigars in the house-boat that evening, that had the mandarin not been a decent sort of a fellow, and had the *lowdah* been a double-faced brute, as most *lowdahs* are, we should not have got off so easily. We respected Chinese dogs for the rest of our journey; and the American's great consolation seemed to be, not that he had escaped condign punishment, but that he had 'fixed proper' a dog or two.

Being 'run in' in China brings to my mind the only occasion upon which I have been 'run in' in England, and as it was the indirect result of a walking tour I may introduce the anecdote here. It happened thuswise:

During the summer, a year or two back, great consternation and annoyance were caused in a certain district of Kent by incendiary fires. Haystacks, barns, and farm-buildings had been destroyed in several neighbourhoods by some person or persons upon whom the law tried in vain to set hands. Big rewards for the apprehension of offender or offenders were posted up as offered in every town and village, and for some weeks it was the chief topic of conversation in the ale-houses and round the tables of the Kentish farmers. One evening, how-

ever, a man was caught red-handed. Great was the rejoicing thereat; but no sooner was it known in the remoter parts that he had been captured than it was blazed abroad that he had escaped from custody. So the rewards were doubled, and expert London officers sent down to assist in the search. All this I learnt as a humble pedestrian with stick and knapsack, halting here and there at wayside inns, hearing the gossip as it was retailed from mouth to mouth, and watching its growth during the process. And I heard a few extraordinary things. All sorts of tales went about respecting his size, strength, and agility: he was but one of a band of desperadoes who had designs upon the Government; he was sleepless and almost invisible; in fact a very general impression seemed to be that if it was not Old Harry himself, it was a power of equal versatility which directed the outrages. Popular expectations were not a little disappointed when an exact description of the escaped man appeared side by side with the reward-bills. My feelings were a little stronger than disappointment when, upon reading the bill, I saw myself described exactly! This was more than awkward, it was dangerous; and it was the more so inasmuch as the escaped culprit since his escape had not been at his old games again, so that there was but little chance of his being arrested in the act. So I packed up my knapsack, resolved to start and seek fresh woods and pastures new before the description could become familiar to the yokels. At about seven o'clock, amidst torrents of rain and in a darkness that served well to cloak me from observation, I set out. I felt quite a guilty fear as I sneaked away; the banging of a door startled me, and the sound of men's voices grated on my ear, as if there were no coincidence in

the matter, but the black staring fact that I was a criminal against whom every hand in the countryside was raised. Every now and then, as I got further and further into the solitude of the night, I imagined that footsteps were following me; they seemed to stop when I stopped, and proceed when I moved. 'Well,' I thought, 'I am in a hole, and I must put a bold face on the matter and get out of it as best I can.' So I increased my pace and maintained it until I arrived at the Paddock Wood Station. Slinging my knapsack off, I went to the ticket-window, and said, 'Third to—'

'Never mind, my man,' said a voice immediately behind me, and at the same time I felt my arms tightly gripped. I kicked, I struggled, I made use of anything but gentle language. Why was I thus forcibly detained? Why was I, a humble pedestrian who did harm to no one, thus used? Was I an Englishman? Yes, I was, and I had a right to know why my freedom as an Englishman was thus trampled upon. My remonstrances and expostulations were met by grins.

'Now you'd better go quiet, you know,' said a provokingly calm voice; and turning round I saw that I was in custody.

'You've been deuced clever, and kept out of harm a long time. You couldn't expect, you know, not to be collared with this description out;' and he paraded the bill describing the person of the stack-firer before my face.

'Well,' I said, 'I admit that appearances are terribly against me, but I am as innocent of this crime as you are. Do I look like an incendiary? Is this the sort of luggage an incendiary would carry about with him?'

'Well,' replied the officer, 'I can't say as how you do look like

the sort of chap as would do it; but, you see, here's the description and here's you, and you and the description fits in exact, so that I'm obliged and bound to run you in.'

'Well,' I rejoined, 'now you've got me, what are you going to do with me?'

'Take you on to Maidstone for the night, and have you up afore the beak in the morning,' answered the policeman.

So I passed the night at a Maidstone police-station, and amidst a tremendous crowd appeared before the sitting justice of the peace in the morning. It may sound very like the well-worn endings to old-fashioned stories; but the 'beak' happened to be a much-beloved uncle of mine. The coincidence of the likeness was admitted to be extraordinary, and the police-officer commended for his promptness in arresting me; but of course I was liberated, much to the disappointment of the Kentish mob, who believed that there was some 'hocus-pocus' in the matter. I learnt afterwards, however, that the veritable stack and barn burner had been arrested, and 'let in' for ten years' apprenticeship at one of her Majesty's prisons.

Considering the amount of walking that I did in Japan, I met with very few adventures worthy of note. Once, however, I did act a leading part in a little farce. It was during one of my customary Saturday-to-Monday explorations of the country around Yokohama. One Sunday night, after a hard day's wandering under the broiling sun, I arrived at the rather extensive village of Fujisawa on the great main road. Thoroughly tired, I resolved to put up for the night at the White Pine tea-house, and proceed to Yokohama early the following morning. The White Pine was a favourite hostelry with native travellers of the better class, and

enjoyed the additional recommendation that it was almost completely unknown to foreigners. Mats, woodwork, and food-utensils were spotlessly clean, the charges moderate, and the attendant damsels civil and obliging. Although it was next door but one to the big temple of Yebis-Sama, the god of daily food—that is fish—and was facing the high-road, it was perfectly quiet at night, thanks to the solid construction of its shutters. So I made a capital meal, smoked a pipe over a bowl of wine with mine host, and at an early hour turned into my quilts for sleep. Somehow or other, whether from the lobster I had enjoyed, or from the last cup of wine, my dreams were of a weird and disturbed nature. At one time I was scaling the Matterhorn (I had been reading Whympers's book, and my mind was full of the horrible slip which occurred on his descent); then I was on the Paris boulevards at a time of public disturbance, running with a howling shrieking mob; then I was back at Haileybury, and the bell by the great gate was clanging so that it awakened me. There was a bell ringing and an unmistakable howling and shrieking going on; the room, too, was lit by a broad lurid glare, and I knew that there was a fire somewhere. I looked out through the half-closed shutters, and saw that the street was filled with a howling rushing mob, and that the fire was very close to the tea-house. In a few moments I was half-dressed and out in the street. The local firemen were hard at work with their useless banners, their almost equally useless squirts, their ladders and axes; but the fire did just what it liked, and house after house was consumed. Then the cry arose that the temple of the fish-god was on fire.

'Save Yebis Sama! Save Yebis

Sama !' shrieked a hundred voices. The old temple stood back some way from the street, and was separate from the line of houses on each side, so that the flames seemed to gather themselves together before making the leap. Then a puff of wind came, and in a moment the deep dry thatch of the roof was in flames. Half a dozen active fellows, regardless of smoke, sparks and danger, leapt on to the roof and endeavoured to stifle and quench the blaze, but with no appreciable result. The cry grew louder: 'Save Yebis Sama !' Fires had, ever since my arrival in Japan, had a fascination for me, and very soon I was in the midst of the turmoil and excitement, working with the firemen and coolies ; hacking here, hauling there, now on a tottering beam, now on my belly in the suffocating smoke—drenched with water, scorched, singed, bruised, and begrimed. The excitement was intense, and the excitement made the scene fascinat-

ing. If I, an Englishman, could get that god out—that god who, if he was any good at all, could put a stop to the whole business—what kudos there would be ! So I broke through the lattice-work in front of the shrine, scattered the bronze ornaments with my axe, and seized the god. But how to get back through the flames and smoke ?

I do not remember anything more until I found myself lying in my room at the White Pine. They told me that I had been taken out for dead, but that I had done a great public service, and that the mayor wished to thank me for it. I escaped, they said, thanks to the efforts of the god. Had I not had the idol in my hands I should assuredly have lost my life. It was a foolish whim of mine, and I did not attempt to save any more wooden deities, although I afterwards witnessed the burning of a good many temples.

A ROMANCE OF THE ENGADINE.

I WAS only a poor scholar. There was a time when the title of poor scholar would have conciliated something of sympathy and reverence in the minds of most people. But this notion, with the whole lot of mediæval rubbish, has been eliminated from the minds of English folk. Once, instead of being a poor scholar, I had reason to consider myself a rich scholar. I was the son of a rich man; and I had reason to believe that I should one day be a rich man myself. That I do not arrogantly assume to myself the title of scholar may be assumed from the fact that I actually gained a scholarship at my college, which was one of the largest of the small colleges at Cambridge. It was worth fifty pounds a year; but my father would not allow me to keep the money. I know many a wealthy young fellow who would gladly have pocketed it, and where 'the governor' would have been extremely well pleased that such had been the case. 'But no, my dear boy,' said my father; 'you have shown yourself a scholar by coming in first at the examination, and now let the money go to the next best man, who may want it more than you do.' Nevertheless the good dad was so pleased that he added a hundred a year to my allowance, which was large enough already. So I continued my scholarly pursuits, such as they were, not exactly as the regular Cantab does, as may best 'pay' at the examinations, but as the opening avenues of literature might beckon me forward into their beloved vistas. When I had been two years at the

University the crash came. I need not go into it minutely. It was one of those commercial crashes which have only been too common of late years. My father lost his all—worse than all, for the great failure left him with 'a minus less than nothing.' Fortunately I had no debts. That last hundred pounds was lying untouched at the banker's. My college behaved very nobly. Let me say that those college authorities, whom the careless undergraduate regards as his natural enemies, are capable of behaving with the rarest tenderness and generosity. The Bursar sent to me, and told me that there would be no college charge against me for board, rooms, and tuition, until I should have taken my degree. This was kind indeed; but even this would not cover the inevitable expenses of the University, and I felt that it was my duty to be earning money. The hundred went back to my father, who had to live upon my mother's little property; and I had to set to work to earn some filthy lucre, by which I might maintain myself and help my family as well.

A certain Mr. Fisby had a big school with a big, and not altogether undeserved, reputation. Fisby had been to one of the Universities, and had smuggled himself into some sort of a degree through one of the recognised by-roads. Not being able to get into any profession, he thought that he would take pupils. He asked modest terms and got no answers. Then one of his friends told him that he did not ask enough, and that if he demanded two hundred

a year each he might get plenty of pupils from rich people, who would, of course, imagine that they would be getting an equivalent. A number of pupils flocked to him on these highly satisfactory terms. Some big fellows came, and other fellows stopped till they got big. Fisby was no more competent to teach these big fellows than if he were a Hottentot. To do him justice, he was perfectly aware of the fact. He put on good masters in subjects of which he only had a smattering himself. The name of Charles Murray, formerly scholar of St. Ambrose College, Cambridge, was not a bad one for his purposes, as classical master. I became that classical master, and, as things go, Fisby did not pay me so badly.

At the end of a twelvemonth I had saved money. I had worked hard, not only in my duties, but also on the old lines of work. Then my father strongly urged me to take a holiday. I was suffering from the effects of overwork. Just then there was a sudden rage for the Engadine. People said that a warm climate did not answer in cases of debility, not even the debility of consumption. People in such a state required a bright atmosphere and pure bracing air. Our summer vacation was to last seven weeks; it was nearly all to be spent in Switzerland, and a part of it in the Engadine. I had been in Switzerland as a lad, and the recollections of it sometimes came back to me, both in dreams and day-dreams. I thought I would revisit the old scenes in the Oberland, and then open up new ground in the Engadine before I returned home. I went to Dover, intending to cross to Calais or Ostend. I took a lodging for the night, thinking I was performing a great stroke of economy, when I have reason to believe that I paid double what

my bill would have been at the Lord Warden. I settled that next day I would go over to Ostend. I made the discovery that I might save half-a-sovereign, which in the long-run would mean an extra two days' stay in the Engadine. It was a bright day, with quiet waters and a favourable breeze. I made myself very comfortable in the cheap part of the vessel, avoiding the heat. I got as near as I could to the prow, which on a quiet day is the best part of the ship, where you witness the dividing of the waters, get the freshest of breezes, and have the first opening views of the landscapes and seascapes. A pleasant sensible-looking girl and a fine weather-worn man were sitting very near to the place where I was, and insensibly we all glided into conversation together. I was struck with the man's wide acquaintance with the world; Egypt, India, Australia, South America, seemed as familiar to him as Wapping. He had a shop at Wapping, he told me; but before he took it he had been a courier by profession, and now that his wife could manage it by herself, in the holiday-season of the year he betook himself to his old business as a courier, which gave him a pleasant change and enabled him to save some money. His companion was a lady's-maid, who only with much difficulty could be distinguished from a lady, if, indeed, such a distinction could be safely drawn. She was studying the *Guardian*, and pronouncing clearly-defined opinions on Rites and Ritualism. I found, from what they said, that they were both in attendance on a party in the cabin, a gentleman and lady and their only daughter. The whole party were in a state of great depression on account of the death of an only son from phthisis, and some fears were entertained

lest Miss Grinnell—so the name slipped out—should fall into the same illness which had proved fatal to her brother.

Although a second-class passenger, I had received an intimation that if I wished for lunch or dinner I should be served in the principal cabin. Although I dine late, the middle of the day is always my hungriest time; and I went forward intent upon a solid repast. There were not many persons—such are the chances of war—on board that day. There were, towards the centre of the cabin, a party of three, whom I had no difficulty in identifying with the Grinnells. The gentleman of the party was engaged in reading the *Times*, which he had had the good sense, that I myself had lacked, to secure before he came on board. A lovely girl, slightly propped up by pillows, was apparently engaged over a Tauchnitz volume, but the closed eyelids gave me the idea that her attention was wandering from her author. Her complexion was brilliant, perhaps too brilliant to be perfectly healthy. Her face had a character of intellectual beauty about it which I had seldom or ever beheld, except in the conception of an artist or some summer's dream that comes to a young man's imagination.

I had ventured to ask leave to look at the *Times*, which at that moment had been laid down, and at the sound of an unwonted voice the beautiful eyelashes had unclosed, and a pair of sapphire eyes, incomparable for 'light' and 'sweetness,' had looked down upon me with deep dazzling radiance, and then had languidly closed once more. I took up the *Times*, and read part of the City article upside down; but a sudden solicitude had seized me about this sweet girl, so threatened in the height of her youthful bloom with a

mysterious incomparable malady. There was no mistaking, either, the look of intense fondness and intense anxiety borne by the mother's face.

At Cambridge I was considered a shy man, but just then I felt that I should have liked to converse, and also to have conversed well. But my shyness, such as it was, prevented my commencing; and the thread of the conversation would in any case have been cut short by the abhorred shears of the Fates; for the malignant steward of the ship—if I may apply such a term to an honest and deserving man—came up to me, and said to me, in a tone low indeed, but still sufficiently audible to be heard all over the place,

'If you have finished your dinner, sir, you ought to return to the second cabin. Only first-class passengers are allowed to stay in this cabin.'

A sudden blaze of anger swept through me, such as never before had troubled my tranquil existence. A desire to fling the fellow overboard into the sea, a movement to fling the fellow a sovereign, here and there divided the swift mind. Nothing is more mortifying to a man, at least before years have brought the philosophic mind, than to be convicted of poverty in the presence of a young lady. My eyes instinctively sought hers; would there be any expression of scorn and amusement? None at least that I could detect; perhaps a little wonderment and concern; that was all, if, indeed, that. I did what was perhaps best after all under the circumstances. I deliberately said, 'Thank you—presently,' finished the impossible City article, and beat an inglorious retreat.

Once I met them on the Lake of Geneva. Here again I was in the cheap part of the vessel, but I had the presence of mind quickly to change the ticket. I was irresis-

tibly attracted towards the party, but at the same time they made me feel exceedingly irritable and uncomfortable. I was within eyesight and the sound of their voices, but they calmly ignored my existence. They might just as truly have said that I ignored theirs. Through the rigour of English etiquette it was just the same as if these mountains rose, as if these waters rolled, between me and them. At Geneva I went to an hotel which, as the guide-book described, was quiet, comfortable, and respectable. This just seemed to suit my limited and modest aims. But the hotel was crowded with many of the best people in Europe, princes of Royal blood included, and everything was on a most lavish scale. While I was taking my modest cutlet, the champagne bottles stood in the ice-pail and the early luscious fruits were piled high on the frosted silver. 'To them,' as they say in the playbills, entered another British family of a highly Philistine type. A fortuitous concourse of atoms immediately took place, or rather according to some laws of similars. 'Yes,' I growled to myself, 'things of a kind pair together: wealth with wealth, ignorance with ignorance, imbecility with imbecility.' So I glared at them; at least, I glared as much as my mild nature would allow, and resolved that next morning I would forsake the palatial and depart on an honest trudge.

Now in this Swiss tour I was necessarily studying economy in all its various branches. I often investigated the state of my narrow resources. My slender store of sovereigns looked a little larger when converted into napoleons, the exchange also being slightly in my favour, and so long as these napoleons held out, and no longer, was my foreign tour to continue. Mr. Ball, in one of his excellent guide-

books to the Alps, says that a considerable number of napoleons may be carried without inconvenience in the waistcoat-pocket. Exactly, but I would cheerfully submit to the inconvenience if I could only pocket the napoleons. A solitary fiver was retained in the further end of my purse, to re-conduct me to my country's shores once more when 'my little all' should be gone. With all my care, perhaps because I never could do things meanly, the inevitable smelting process still went on. I did not take a tourist ticket, because it seemed to me that I should be surrendering my own free will to that of Mr. Cook; and so I did not make any saving that might be made in this direction. But in other respects I did things very cheap, and I believe much more pleasantly than if I had done them very dear. One great rule was to avoid all the beaten tracks frequented by the English. I a little reminded myself of Goldsmith as he fiddled his way through France, as he has so deliciously told us in his *Traveller*. While the comfortable tourist went to the lordly hotel I was content to go to the wayside inn. I have made delicious dinners there—a chicken, a bottle of the wine of the country, a melon or grapes—at a quarter of the *table-d'hôte* prices. Sometimes I would go to some little chalet on the mountain pasturages, and allay hunger and thirst with a crust and copious draughts of pure milk. I would sit by the side of a rocky stream and wash out and dry a few things, that I might save the delay and expense of a laundress. I could not take an open carriage, which I should rather have liked; but, except over those long stretches of interminable dusty road which one sometimes meets with, I avoided the crowded diligence. Unless I could get the *coupé* or the *banquette* there was no place for which I cared. And even

if I had the place which I preferred I was hurried through scenery where I should like to have lingered and taken my time. So I sent on my heavy luggage by the diligence, the best use to which a diligence could be put, and went on foot over several of the passes, with a light hand-bag and a stout umbrella which would both give me a staff for support and a shade for sunshine. I was thus able to cross or recross the stream as might happen, to wander through the wayside wood, to penetrate the lateral valley, to rest at the country albergo, to enter into chance conversation with pedestrians like myself—muscular Christians these last, students as myself, or students who had developed into full-blown parsons and professional men.

I had come to the little town of Splügen on my travels, from which the famous pass takes its name. How lovely had been my prolonged walk that day! I had walked through the gorgeous pass of the Via Mala, through which coach or carriage thunders in three-quarters of an hour, but where the observant and thoughtful pilgrim may well spend hour after hour amid scenes the like of which he will very rarely see on this side the Millennium. Then, by the shores of the Hither-Rhine, which had raved at a sunless depth in the deep narrow gorge, but which was now at an easy declivity from the road, or ran parallel with the smooth turf at its side. I had passed through the little village of Endeer, and then up and up to the town of Splügen. Now most Swiss tourists will recall that Splügen is wondrously beautiful in its surroundings, and awfully dirty in itself. I do not often affect the lordly hotel; but still sometimes I do, because in travelling you ought to see every variety of traveller. At Splügen two great roads meet,

that of the Splügen Pass and that of the Bernardino Pass. I wandered all around the environs, and there was only one hotel, and that not particularly lordly. I had intended that summer evening to have gained the summit of the pass, and to have made part of my way to Chiavenna. At the time that I had finished my slight dinner, the skies that had been so brilliant were utterly overcast. Even at that great height above the sea-level there was the dull, languid, oppressive feeling, that comes when the atmosphere is charged with electricity. Soon the heavy thunder drops fell, thickening into floods and sheets of water; the most vivid flashes of lightning that I had ever seen in my life, with solemn reverberations of thunder amid the lonely hills.

It was my first experience, a most magnificent experience, of an Alpine storm. I recalled Byron's description of such a storm, and verified it to the letter. To me there was something infinitely impressive, but not at all appalling, in the glittering of those forked lightnings and the rollings of the solemn thunders. The storm gave no signs of holding up, and as it was getting late in the day there was no chance of my continuing my journey on foot. I engaged a bedroom at once, and they told me at the *bureau* that I was fortunate in getting one, as the room I took was the last one in the house. So I went up to my little room and lighted the 'bougies'—which would certainly be charged for whether lighted or not—and tried to go on with my reading and writing, very much the same as in my old Cambridge rooms. But my attention was repeatedly distracted by the magnificence of the storm. At times there was a lull, a lull so long that it almost seemed as if it had passed away, and then it

burst forth afresh with unmitigated violence. There was not much reading and writing done; and I thought that instead of descending again to the *salle à manger* I would extinguish the lights, rest on a sofa in front of the window, and watch the lightning.

I had dropped into a light uneasy sleep, the sleep of a man who is conscious that he has not undressed and gone to bed in the regular orthodox fashion, when I was awoke by hearing the rumbling of carriage-wheels, and then the carriage stopped at the inn-door. I struck a light and looked at my watch, and found that it was only half-past eleven o'clock. I thought that I might find some guests in the smoking-room, and might get some *limonade gazeuse* and a biscuit. When I descended I found that something a little like an altercation was going on in the hall. The new arrivals were demanding beds, and the landlord was protesting, with much eloquent gesticulation, that there were no beds to be had. Obviously it was to the landlord's interest to let his beds if he had any, and therefore his asseverations might be considered worthy of credit. Nevertheless they were received with what looked like incredulous despair. If they would only go on as far as Ender, some seven or eight miles further, there was a good inn, and he knew for certain that the place was quite empty that morning. Still there was the doubt, and the horses were dead beaten and the travellers were very tired.

'And my daughter is not at all well,' he continued to the English-speaking, the polyglot landlord. 'She is away for her health, and a night of exposure on the mountains might be the worst thing possible for her.'

'O, never mind me, papa!' exclaimed a sweet voice from the

carriage. 'I am perfectly well, and could go on for ever so long.'

I knew the voice, I recognised the cloaked figure, I knew the party again—the party of the steamer and of the hotel.

'If monsieur—' said the landlord, giving me a glance, and for the first time realising my presence.

I did not let him finish the sentence; but stepping forward with more moral courage than I possessed before, said,

'My room is quite unused; I have only been reading and writing. It is double-bedded; and, if the ladies will do me the honour of accepting it, it is quite at your service.'

A hasty and resolute 'Thanks,' given from the head of the party, which drowned any hesitation on the part of the ladies, at once closed the matter in the affirmative. The gentleman thanked me very much, and expressed an opinion, in which I thoroughly coincided, that he had seen me somewhere before.

I had my *limonade gazeuse*, and the ladies had some as well, while the chief had as hearty a meal as could be obtained under the circumstances. Then the two ladies and their maid withdrew to the room which I had relinquished for them. The courier and coachman disposed of themselves in those mysterious ways in which couriers and coachmen can contrive to manage at times. Mr. Grinnell and myself remained in conversation some time. He talked affably, indeed, as should be the case when I had rendered him a favour; but, at the same time, I was afraid that he hardly had the good taste really to like me. They had come that morning from St. Bernardino, having made the long divergent journey to see the source of the Rhine, that well-known gray torrent that bursts

from its glacier and plunges into its gorge. On their way back to the village of Hinterrhein, the storm burst forth; but, as the accommodation was very limited, and what seemed a prosperous lull had set in, they thought they would push on the dozen miles to Splügen. They were going on to Thusis, and thence to the Engadine. He had a very favourable opinion of the Engadine. All the doctors spoke well of it, and one or two friends of his own had derived decided benefit. His daughter's health was not good. She had been very sad and depressed since the death of her only brother, and the physicians thought that travel might do her good, and especially a sojourn in the bracing air of the Engadine. Then we had a discussion of the comparative advantages of Davos and the Engadine. We admitted that Davos had a wonderful winter climate for so great an altitude, and that it probably escaped the Italian vapours that sometimes rolled over the Engadine; but, at the same time, when once we were acclimatised to the Engadine, it was to be hoped that great things might be done for those who were in want of great things. And now the *molliæ tempora fandi* were exhausted, and we were shown into a small *salon* with two sofas, where a rough kind of bed was made up for each of us.

The next morning the waiter put all our breakfasts together on a table fronting the window,—a most deserving waiter, whom I tipped beyond my small means when I went away. It seemed quite a natural arrangement, which was adopted on all sides without demur. I voted it a great improvement upon the past state of things. It was a brilliant morning, the air being freshened and purified, and the snow-crowned heights seemed brought very near

in the pellucid atmosphere. I almost regretted that I had made up my mind to cross the Splügen and descend upon the Italian plains and lakes; but then I bethought myself that I could return by the Maiola Pass to the Engadine, where I should doubtless find the Grinnells at St. Moritz or somewhere else in the valley, if I quickened my steps and did not linger too long upon the road.

The ladies thanked me very heartily for the room, more so, indeed, than old Grinnell seemed to think at all necessary.

'Do you know you left some books there, Mr.—' and here Miss Grinnell hesitated.

'Fortescue, Eustace Fortescue.'

'They were not the books one generally finds—*Bradshaw, Ball, Bædeker.*'

'No,' I exclaimed, with a laugh; 'but some other busy B's,—Butler, Bacon, Browning.'

'The alliteration is very curious, but I was awake very early and looked into all three of the volumes.'

'And what do you make of them, Miss Grinnell?'

'Well, I knew something of Browning before, and of course a great deal of Mrs. Browning. But I honestly confess that I knew nothing about Bacon and Butler, and I thought that they would be in immense folios, and not in such neat little handy books as you have.'

'Well, Bacon is an immense writer, and that little book only contains a small portion of his writings, and perhaps his best part; but the octavo volume contains all Butler, which is not so very much after all.'

'I wish I knew all about them, said Maud.

'And what makes you carry such dry books about with you?' asked Mrs. Grinnell.

'As for me,' said Mr. Grinnell,



A ROMANCE OF THE ENGADINE.



'I shall eat a bit of *Bacon*, and I shall ring the bell for the *Butler* to bring me up a small bottle of light wine.'

Then I made answer to Mrs. Grinnell:

'I carry the books about because I was just reading them when I left the University. They pack so much thought in such little compass. When I tire of my own thoughts I turn to them, and they are authors which I find very helpful in understanding the meaning of Nature.'

Old Grinnell looked rather comic.

'But they are very old fellows. They are all exploded now. The French and German fellows have got the pull now,' said he.

'Not at all,' I said. 'The modern French philosophy, Comte's Positive philosophy, is pretty well constructed out of Bacon's system.'

Old Grinnell declined to pursue the conversation, at least on these lines, any further.

'O, I know something about that,' exclaimed Maud. 'I attended some lectures at a ladies' college, and a man came who lectured about Comte and Herbert Spencer and several other men. But I am afraid that I have forgotten. But I don't know anything about Butler.'

'Butler be blowed!' muttered old Grinnell *sotto voce*.

'Butler's not at all hard,' I said. 'There was an Oxford man who was in for his examination for Greats, and Butler was one of the subjects. The man to be examined was clever enough, and knew his other subjects well; but he had totally neglected his Butler, and had every reason to expect being plucked. In his despair he went to his tutor, Professor Jowett. "Have you got half an hour to spare?" asked Jowett. "I have just half an hour before I have to go into the schools

again," said the man. "Now listen to me," said Jowett; "all Butler's reasoning can really be reduced to four governing ideas. If you can master Butler's four ideas, you can answer any paper that any examiner can set you on Butler." The man went in, and, as the University legend goes, cleared the paper.'

'O, tell me all about Butler's four ideas! I have got more than half an hour before the carriage starts.'

I knew the young lady very little; but then I knew my Butler, although, perhaps, I ought not to say so, extremely well. To the great amusement of the father and mother I proceeded to indoctrinate her with the Butlerian ideas in Nature and theology, and added the corollary that this wonderful Swiss scenery was really a revelation of the mind of Deity. As, however, I question whether my readers would be equally tolerant of such difficult speculations, I will omit my little lecture, only assuring them that such philosophy, when discussed with a bright intelligent girl of nineteen, is not only

'harsh and crabbed,

But musical as is Apollo's lute.'

For the nonce I was an Abelard instructing an Eloisa. But ere the four ideas were thoroughly discussed, the carriage was at the door to bear them downhill through the Via Mala to Thusis and the Engadine; and I had to scale the icy forlorn heights of the Splügen, and then descend the zigzag path cut in the perpendicular sides of the mountain. If I had taught Maud a lesson in philosophy, she had also taught me some lessons in love.

In about ten days' time I made my way back from Chiavenna through the Maloja Pass to Samâden into the Upper Engadine. There was a secret loadstone which thus

led me northwards again. The Engadine, I need hardly tell my readers versed in *Murray*, is the sixty-mile-long Valley of the Inn. The valley is one vast meadow, with sheep-pastures extending up the mountain-slopes. The flocks arrive thin and starved in the early summer, and go away fat and well-liking in the early autumn. It is a happy valley, with little or no want or beggary, unless the civilisation (?) wrought by crowds of tourists should corrupt its simplicity. Let me transcribe a more interesting passage than is often found in guide-books: 'The sons of the valley, for the most part, quit home at an early age, scatter themselves over the Continent, and are to be found in most of the capitals working as pastry-cooks, confectioners, distillers of liqueurs, clerks in warehouses, keepers of *cafés*, and sellers of chocolate. Many of them thus acquire independence, and become millionaires in florins, with which they return to end their days in their native valley. They display their wealth especially in the architecture of their houses, which are distinguished by their large dimensions and solidity, by their decorations of whitewash, gilding, frescoes, escutcheons, and elaborate wrought-iron *grilles* and gates. One reason for their large size is that they often comprise under the same roof barn, stable, and cowshed.' It took some time to go through all the valley; but I sought the Grinnells ineffectually at Maloia, at St. Moritz, at Silvaplana, and at half a dozen places. How I denounced myself for the lack of moral courage which had not allowed me to ascertain their probable address when I had met them at Splügen! At last I met with some good-natured people who seemed to identify the party, and assured me that they had gone on

to Pontresina. And accordingly I took the well-known footpath from St. Moritz, which crosses the little Inn between the lake and the waterfall, and so on through the wood.

In this region there is a great deal of mountain-climbing. I had never been much of a climber, but I had inured myself to it by practice. I had not done so to the extent of a friend, who told me that he carried out the plan of gradually increasing the extent of his climb day by day until he could ascend Monte Rosa without difficulty, and there stand with his heel over Italy and his toe over Switzerland. I had no capacity for such violent delights; but I had got enough training to enable me with ease to effect any moderate ascents.

For a mountain climb, for those who are inexperienced in such ways, is trying to delicate constitutions, as will be seen presently. There is generally a long walk to the foot of the mountain, which ought to be saved; and then, after a provokingly easy ascent, the real climb begins. But you like it, and you say with truth that you like it, and you enjoy it heartily, and you cut off the corners of the zigzags in order to save ground. Yes, my young friend, but when you have to go on zigzagging, mile after mile, hour after hour, you begin to pull against the collar; you feel it in your chest or your backbone, or through the muscular system generally. It is certainly very trying. Trying to find that when you think you are nearly on the top you are only half-way; when the sun beats intolerably at your back; when your companion, who entertains severe disciplinary ideas, ruthlessly refuses to let you sit down, because you will only be much more tired afterwards. There are some things which are pleasant enough in the ascent: pleasant to note the boskage and the delicious

wild-flowers, to observe the ever-widening prospects; and sometimes, though rarely, to taste of some fountain that bursts from the rock. Then if the unwonted climber is really weakly or of a nervous turn, the ascent begins to tell on him. The fatal misfortune on the Matterhorn seems to have been due to a man who was trying more than he was able to perform. If you are working your way through a forest, dotting the lower side of the mountain, the trees seem to close in and almost to suffocate one. Indeed, to a nervous person, although the path is really safe enough, it is easy to see that a stumble or a blunder might cause very serious consequences. Then the path is at times very narrow and precipitous; you instinctively cling close to the mountain, feeling that a second might send you a thousand feet into space. You are no better off if you are on a mule, for you feel that the mule may go over the edge, or you may go over the mule. With a little practice, however, all this nervous feeling goes away, and one of joyous security succeeds. I had pretty well gone through all the stages during this tour; but there was one traveller journeying up the mountain to whom the experience was new, and to whom it might have proved disastrous.

It was not very far from the summit, where a narrow ledge of path glided round the bare rock of a mountain, that my progress was barred by a party of three ladies, one of whom was supported by the other.

'Good heavens! she has fainted, she has fainted, she will die!' exclaimed one of the ladies.

I rushed forward, and there was Maud Grinnell, nearly or entirely insensible.

'She would walk up, she would walk up,' exclaimed Mrs. Grinnell,

'and either she has been tired out by the long path, or she has been frightened by this narrow dangerous bit. O, what shall we do?'

I knew that there was only one thing to be done. It was at least three hours to the village on the slope, and one hour to the nearest water. But it was only half an hour to the summit, and on a day like this I knew that there would be people who would give help and refreshment; very likely people from the village had taken up refreshment for expected visitors. And now Maud had actually fainted. There was only one way by which she could be carried along the ledge. Fortunately I had a little weak brandy-and-water in my flask, and succeeded in pouring some down her throat. Then I took her up in my arms as if she were a child—and she was not much more—and though there might have been just a little danger in the effort, I bore her along to a point where the path considerably widened, and there was a margin of turf below the rock. I could not forbear, for a moment, pressing the poor girl to my heart, at what really seemed to me a critical moment. Presently she was quite safe. A sudden torrent of tears, the fingers convulsively clasped mine, and 'O, it is you!' she exclaimed with returning reason, as I rested her on the turf against the rock.

One of the ladies had followed easily enough, but I had to return for Mrs. Grinnell, whose nerves were dreadfully shattered. She flew to her daughter, and presently Maud Grinnell, with smiles and tears, thanked me for the help which I had been so fortunate as to render her. It seemed that a large party of ladies had arranged to start that morning from one of the Pontresina hotels for the top of the Piz

Languard. They said, and said truly, that the ascent was not so very much, and that it was constantly done by ladies; but then it is not easy for ladies in delicate health and who are making their first experiments in mountaineering. The others had pushed on with the mules that carried the restaurating baskets, and Maud and her mother had gradually lagged behind, save that one lady had fallen into conversation with them, and kindly bore them company.

It was certainly very pleasant work when we came to rest on the summit with all the materials of a sumptuous lunch. Every kind of reserve, if there ever had been such beyond what my shy nature had assumed, ceased to exist. All the social ice had dissolved into melting genial waters. The young girl's nervousness disappeared as she enjoyed the thorough rest and the regained companionship of her friends. As I lay at the feet of Maud, and the field-glasses and the panoramic plans passed from hand to hand, she disclosed the treasures of a tender, imaginative, and well-stored mind. She was so entirely recovered that she passed the giddy corner this time on returning without nervousness, and indeed she has always insisted that it was the long walk and no lack of courage that caused her to faint away at this critical point. And now I was admitted to very intimate companionship with the Grinnells; the courier found his occupation gone, and, meeting with even a still better opening, in great disgust proffered his resignation. Very pleasant indeed were the three weeks that I spent with them in the Engadine.

I need not tell at any length the idyllic story of my courting in the Swiss valley. I do not profess to say for a single moment that old Grinnell, when he knew all about my history and surroundings, would,

as a sane man in his senses, think that I was a desirable man for his son-in-law. But it so happened that, unworthy as I was, I had enlisted Maud's affections before he knew it, or I myself knew it, or sweet Maud herself knew it. He was quite wrapped up in his only child. He had gathered the belief, surely not on irrational grounds, that a happy love would be the best security for health and serenity; but that a misfortune in love might sap the very springs of being. And after all there was nothing against me but my poverty, and nothing against my father but the misfortune which in these unhappy days of depression has happened to so many worthy gentlemen. I spoke at last with as much kind encouragement as ever a maiden's mother gave to suitor. I took the gracious gift with no consciousness of desert on my side, but as one takes those bounteous gifts which a kindly Providence showers upon us. It was settled that I should not return to Mr. Fisby's: I was to be promoted to a desk in the inner office, and in due time I became both son-in-law and junior partner.

Sometimes my wife will drive down to the office and fetch me home in the brougham, and if I have gone to the club will lay in wait for me there, that I may get a drive in the Park before dinner. People tell me, and I repeat without indorsing the flattery, that for a mere scholar I am a very good man of business, and that scholarship is not a bad element in commercial life. As for my wife, you would never think, from her buxom curves and roses on her cheeks, that she was ever thought in danger of consumption. We went to Switzerland for the honeymoon, and we mean to go there regularly. We both agree that the Engadine is the most delightful part of Switzerland.

THE LEGEND OF THE WILLOW-PATTERN PLATE.

LI-CHI was a maiden with nothing to do
But to sit still and dream, or sip tea (without cream),
Or give ear to the coo of her doves (there were two),
Or eat sweetmeats, her fondness for which was extreme.

Her pa was a mandarin, wealthy and great,
And pompous withal, a position so big held he;
His house and estate may be seen in the plate,
Though portrayed in a style somewhat higgledy-piggledy.

The trees, some like feathers, and some like piled stones,
Are quite a burlesque of the science of botany;
For Hooker would swear by Linnæus's bones
That like them in Nature there surely are not any.

How like a bird's claw spreads the uncovered root
Of the comical willow! But queerest of trees is
The one on the right, from whose waving arms shoot,
Not leaves, but great puddings, as round as Dutch cheeses!

But perhaps it's too bad to make fun of old crockery
(A lengthy digression's undoubtedly wrong);
And our story still less is a subject for mockery:
It is so pathetic, though not very long.

A young man named Chang, with a lovely pigtail,
Kept the mandarin's books of receipts and expenses;
And Li-Chi at his step would turn red and then pale,
And a gentle commotion would steal o'er her senses.

For when a young lady has nothing to do
But to sit still and dream, as related above,
The chances at least are as twenty to two
That her favourite dream is of *falling in love*.

And their eyes having met—how or why, they knew not—
As she sat in a balcony fondling a kitten,
Li-Chi was enamoured of Chang on the spot,
And Chang, in like manner, with Li-Chi was smitten.

What had happened was quickly suspected, because
Li-Chi every day grew more pensive and 'moony';
And Chang couldn't long hide the fact that he was
What the unsympathetic are apt to call 'spoony.'

With blushes as soft as the tints of the dawn are,
 She heard his fond vows,—but, unluckily, so did
 Her pa, who then chanced to be just round the corner;
 And on Chang, with a bang, his displeasure exploded.

Said he, in deep tones, like the sound of a gong,
 'These fine goings-on I object to *in toto* !
 What next? Go along! Get you hence to Hong-Kong!
 Or (the further the better) the moon you may go to !'

But, as that destination was not to his mind,
 Chang fled to his own island home with his fair one
 (A view of it, drawn in the pattern, you'll find,
 Close to where the horizon would be, if there were one).

This hearing, the mandarin, snatching a whip,
 Up and down his domains began wildly to tear about;
 His moustache (that had hung like rats' tails from his lip)
 Bristling up at an angle of forty or thereabout.

Then, with language profane, and with threats of the cane
 Applied in the manner they call *bastinado*,
 He went in pursuit of Li-Chi and her swain—
 What less could a parent who would be obeyed do?

Now the conjurer's art and electro-biology,
 And such things, are wondrous and strange; but you'll see it is
 A fact, if you'll turn to your heathen mythology,
 That they're fairly outdone by the tricks of the deities.

Only think of the self-transformations of Jove
 (Who, if mortal, I fear would be thought a sad dog)
 When, in search of adventures, he sometimes would rove
 Far from heaven, and wanted to travel *incog.* !

So the gods, looking down through the gathering mists
 At eve, saw the lovers, whose plight so concerned them,
 That, to shield them in peace from the mandarin's fists,
 They graciously *into two turtle-doves turned them* !

At the top of the pattern you'll find them depicted,
 Each with two pairs of wings; but you're left to imagine
 The kicks upon innocent people inflicted,
 And the uproar the mandarin vented his rage in.

And of such a surprising romance of devotion
 As the quaint Chinese pattern's designed to perpetuate,
 You'll freely confess that you hadn't a notion,
 When last off a plate of a blue-willow 'set' you ate.

ON HAVING TOO MUCH AND TOO LITTLE TO DO.

AMONG the various classifications to which human beings may be subjected, there is one that makes them consist respectively of those who have too much, and those who have too little, to do. As a rule, however, a great deal of error lurks under a sweeping generalisation. Nothing is so false as facts, except figures, to which we may also add except philosophical 'generalisations.' Of course there are a set of people who have too much, and another set who have too little, to do; but my belief is that the majority of people belong to both categories, that at varying times of their life they have respectively too much and too little to do. Of the two sharply contrasted classes it must be much more comfortable and agreeable to belong to the latter; but on the broad principle that it is better to wear out than to rust out, it may be supposed that the first lot may intrinsically be more human and more honourable. It happens in the case of multitudes of people that they have really too little to do in early life; they have seasons of much holiday and glorious leisure; then comes the long middle stretch of life with its incessant activities; and then, when men retire from business, or business retires from them, there is the protracted evening during which many who have had too much now find that once more they have too little to do. Of course the real philosophy of life is to hit the golden mean, to steer between the too much and too little; but practically there are

quite sufficient people who miss the mean to furnish us with an article on them and their ways.

O this ample, blessed, glorious season of youth, with its leisure and independence and hopes and chances! In these days especially, when the home rule is so mild and loving—very different from the Rhadamanthine rigour which some of us remember—when the tone of our public schools is infinitely altered and softened, when even the universities lay as much stress on racquets and the river as upon lectures and chapel, there a season of leisure which may never come back again in life, or perhaps not till life is nearing its final rapids. There are many young people whose lives are miserably overtaxed in working for open scholarships at school; but there are also numbers who really seem to have too little to do. And it is just possible that early in life young people may acquire an inveterate habit of this too little, which may last all through life and thoroughly spoil it for them. One of our greatest judges was lamenting to a friend of mine the other day that he was altogether behind in the literature of the day. If you go to a barrister or member of Parliament in the full tide of activity, he will probably tell you that he has no time for reading; and if you are a youngster he will probably exhort you to do what you can in the way of reading while you are young, because when you have too much to do there will be no time for it. It may be said

generally of our *jeunesse dorée* that they have too little to do. There are all sorts of diabolical proverbs about such men. 'The devil tempts other men, but idle men tempt the devil.' 'The devil dances in an idle head.'

Of course this applies to our very charming but somewhat volatile young friend, the girl of the period. That interesting young woman frequently answers to the name of Lady Clara Vere de Vere. We all know that that very unsettled young person had a great deal too little to do.

'Is time so heavy on your hands,
You needs must play such pranks as
these?'

Such young people speak of pastime, *i.e.* passing time, also of killing time, and are frequently pathetic in their declarations that they have 'nothing to do.' Then our poet remonstrates with 'Clara,' and altogether shows us that 'Clara' is in a very bad way. One does not require to be an heiress to have Clara's faults.

'Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,
If time be heavy on your hands,
Are there no beggars at your gates,
Or any poor about your lands?
O, teach the orphan boy to read,
Or teach the orphan girl to sew.'

Certainly the most plentiful class of those who have 'too little to do' was mainly recruited from young ladies. They had a plentiful and even a perilous amount of leisure on their hands. We are improving all this. Women are beginning to find out their mission. They now make nurses, Sisters of Mercy, doctors (I think their doctoring ought to be limited to women and children), telegraph clerks, members of School-Boards, mistresses of Board schools, which many young ladies might find pleasanter and more remunerative than governessing. It is only to be feared that there are still many young ladies who do too little, who,

if they did not look so far afield and only just looked at home, might have reason to alter their complaint of the too little into that of the too much. And this also is to be noted as a curious fact, that many who complain of the too much are, in point of fact, among those who have the too little. My clerical friends often tell me that they can find hard-worked mothers of large families who will give them effective help in their parishes, while childless mothers, or widows, or leisurely young ladies will plead a multiplicity of engagements. But this experience is as old as the hills. Horace talks of his strenuous idleness, and Grotius confesses his habit of laboriously doing nothing.

I am always very sorry for those who have too little to do. They seem to me scarcely to have a fair chance in the world. Their natures are not properly taxed and tested, trained and developed. They might have been among the great and wise and good and famous in the world; but they have fallen back into the ranks of the *ignavum pecus*. Their liberation from the common cares and activities of life, on which, perhaps, they prided and plumed themselves, is their drawback and their bane. It is even possible that it may help to kill them. A traveller who visited the Pitcairn islanders in their lonely Pacific home found some of them dying of sheer old age when between fifty and sixty. They had too little to do. The rough fibre of life, for its due adjustment, needs a certain amount of work and worry—of working against the collar, of straining against wind and tide.

One day two strangers met at a little inn in the Isle of Wight. One was a medical man; the other was a man of letters, whose avocations

gave him incessant work, and called him into all sorts of places. I expect that the same desire for repose had brought them through different paths to this same quiet haven of rest. In the morning the special correspondent—so we had better designate him—lay languidly on the grass, plucking buttercups and daisies, and gazing languidly into the blue depths of the sky. Charles James Fox used to say that there was only one thing better than lying on the grass with a book, and that was lying on the grass without a book.

The medical man watched him. Those medical men often have a trick of watching every one. Their fellow-creatures are their books, and they get into the habit of scanning such pages very swiftly.

'Sir,' said the medical man, 'I should think that you were rather fond of lying on the grass and gathering daisies.'

'Sir,' was the answer, 'I have a passion for it. I should like nothing better in life than to lie on the ground and pluck the daisies.'

'And yet, sir,' was the rejoinder, 'I have a strong idea that you are a man who goes about a great deal in the world, and takes an interest in a great many subjects.'

'I go about a great deal too much, and work a great deal more than I like. If I had my choice in life, I should lie all day long on the grass and pick daisies.'

'Do you know, sir, what would be the probable result of your having too little to do?'

'Well, what would it be?'

'It would probably be an attack of paralysis. To shut up work would probably be to close your existence.'

And practically this is a kind of thing which does not happen so infrequently as might be sup-

posed. It is always a dangerous crisis for the professional man who retires from the full tide of business without having learned the art of cultivating and enjoying leisure. Men of the highest professional eminence have found themselves absolutely stranded when they have passed from the condition of having too much to that of having too little to do. One might here tell tragic narratives of melancholy despair and suicide.

There are some persons who appear to be absolutely insatiable in their desire for work. The more they have, the more they want. They are absolute gluttons in the way of business. They are a description of people who always carry note-books and pocket-books with them, and seem to have a positive delight in accumulating memoranda, and, it is only fair to say, in industriously working through them when the proper time and opportunity arrive. Then they check them off with great internal chuckling and delight, and commence upon a new series. Such people, no doubt, are very kind and well-intentioned; but they are often their own worst enemies. One day I asked my friend Jones to make an appointment with me. There were good reasons why we should spend an hour together. Jones consulted his little book. There was no day, scarcely any hour in any day, that had not its engagement for the next fortnight. It was a matter of the most elaborate calculation before a time could be fixed. One day Jones met one of these intensely busy people—rather a distinguished man in his way—down at Westminster. He spoke, and very truly, of the multiplicity of his engagements. 'I will give you a bit of advice, my friend,' said he. 'Go to West-

minster Pier and take the penny steamer to London Bridge and back.' 'Yes,' he answered, with a sigh, 'there are no doubt plenty of cheap amusements around us, only there is no time for them.' Of course he did not take the penny steamer. Instead of taking penny steamers he got ill and died.

The nervous system will not stand more than a certain amount. If you do not treat it well, it becomes paralysed, as our friend in the Isle of Wight explained. It appears to me that a man is almost as badly off as a convict-prisoner if he is tied up to the moral triangle every day of his life by those mems in his pocket-book. What time does he leave himself for reading and thinking, for his own private tastes and pursuits?

There are some men who have not only the taste for hard work and the capacity for it, but are also under the necessity of it by reason of their great position. They cannot escape from having too much to do. The Prime Minister, or the Attorney-General, or any professional man works in a way that would be disdained by his lowest menial. A great man becomes great by reason of the survival of the fittest. Look at our great men! What broad chests and abdomina they have! What hard heads inside and outside! Look at such a man as Mr. Gladstone, who at one epoch has the cares of empire upon his shoulders, and at another invests a little fortune in post-cards, and answers every inquiry as if he were the editor of *Notes and Queries* or of the *Family Herald* itself. He is like an elephant that can either crack a nut or prostrate an oak. Among the last letters of George Canning is one in which he mentions Pozzo Borgo's secret of getting through much work. It was *l'un après*

l'autre. It was the keeping of things distinct—the thoroughly doing one thing before you went on to the other. There is the fairy order whose wand reduces the most heterogeneous materials to comparative simplicity. For many people the work is simply impossible. I know a man who gets about three thousand letters every morning. He sends a cart for them every morning to the General Post Office, and of course the Government is anxious to give him every facility. He has a small army of clerks to attend to his letters. Only those which are private or very special actually come before him. One is reminded of Napoleon's classification of business. Some is done, some does itself, and some is left undone. It is astonishing how much business does itself. If you only leave your letters alone, as a rule they answer themselves. The man who has really too much to do finds that his only way of living his life is to work by time and not by piece. Make up your mind to strike work at a certain definite time. It is a fine feeling to know that you have work to do, and that you are doing it; that you are doing it fairly well, and that your work tells. You are cutting down trees in the forest of difficulty. You are hewing out the steps by which you will climb to competence and distinction. Those are wise lines of Tennyson, who has so many wise lines:

'Unto him who works, and feels he works,
The same great year is ever at the door.'

Too much work often gives a feeling of bewilderment and dismay, and too much work will possibly end in no work at all. We have all heard of the celebrated housemaid who rose early in the morning for the contemplation of her various duties. There was the cloth to lay, the kitchen to

get tidy, the beds to make, the carpets to be swept, the door to be answered. The housemaid surveyed the situation, and came to the conclusion that she had too much to do, and accordingly went to bed again. A great many people act after the example of that philosophical housemaid. I know a man who discovered one season that he had a great deal too much to do. He had his profession to attend to, a large family to look after; he was engaged in a lawsuit; he was pledged to write articles in daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly periodicals. He was perfectly overwhelmed by the number and variety of his responsibilities. A desperate resolution seized him. He stowed away some surreptitious fivers, and gave positive orders that no letters or telegrams should be sent after him. Then he disappeared among the lakes and mountains of North Italy. For two months he never came near his work. He thought it rather odd when he found out that he had not been much missed, and that the world had got on very well without him. However, he certainly cut the Gordian knot—what a man ought to do when he has got too much to do. He evidently thought that his great business was to ‘get out of it all.’ And if his work was really killing him, and he really came back recuperated for future work, who will say that that too was not a good morning’s work when he put the ‘silver streak’ of the Channel between himself and his manifold perplexities?

I think it is Baron Bunsen who somewhere says that life is a conflict of duties. There is a preliminary stage to be settled. You must first get people to acknowledge the idea of duty at all before you can get them to acknowledge the variety of duties, and to

steer their way among them. There was a very able man who said that his mind was absolutely paralysed when anything presented itself to him in the light of a duty. Sooner or later, however, we begin to appreciate the force of Bunsen’s felicitous phrase. One set of duties drags us one way, and another set of duties drags us another. We are conscious both of a centrifugal and a centripetal force. The result is that, instead of travelling on either side of a square, we describe a diagonal. Perhaps the diagonal is the best road for us. Or we proceed in curves instead of straight lines; and there is a greater mystery and complexity and use about the curve. This reflection may, perhaps, be a source of consolation to some worthy people who may find themselves obliged to mediate between conflicting roads, and, instead of spending their strength with ample result in one direction, are obliged to move on lines which they would hardly have marked out for themselves. But though their orbit may be eccentric, though they may wander beneath strange stars and unfamiliar skies, yet this may be their destined path, designed for rare and excellent uses. And there is one practical lesson, if one might talk sermon-fashion, to be derived from this consideration. When we think we have too much to do we are all very intolerant of interruptions. We grudge the chance visitor his five minutes. It is astonishing, by the way, how much can be done in five minutes. I once called on a very busy man, who held out his watch and told me that he could give me exactly five minutes. My business was over in two minutes, and I rose to go. But he said that we had still three minutes together, and very excellent use we made of

them. Now it is just possible that the interruption may prove of more importance than the original business. The main action of a piece is promoted by its by-play. There is many a man who prefers to go, like a crow, straight to his mark; but most people will think that the meanderings of a river prove of more beauty and use than if it ran in a straight line, like a canal. The interruptions and deviations, especially if attended to without hurry and flurry, form part of the integral business of life. The Czar Nicholas, in a fit of imperialism, determined that he would himself lay down the line of rail from St. Petersburg to Moscow. He made it as straight as a ruler. Doubtless the plan might have its advantages. But he made its way through forest and morass which might easily have been skirted, and left big towns on the right hand and on the left unprovided with railway accommodation; so that I think that, upon the whole, he might have done better if he had turned now to the right and now to the left without pursuing that stern, uncompromising, undeviating line. Which things are an allegory.

Now there is a certain amount of business which we all have to do. It is business which simply has to be done or which does itself, and to leave it undone is an effectual and probably a disastrous way of doing it. We all have to attend to matters of mind, body, and estate. Every person, consciously or unconsciously, maps out a certain range of matters which really must be attended to. Only it is a curious fact, illustrating the perversity of human nature, that many people, having acquired a notion of what they have got to do, put them in a kind of reverse order, doing what is

least necessary and comparatively unimportant first, and leaving what is absolutely essential to come last and to take care of itself. As Macaulay says, there are persons who gather the chaff into the barn and burn up the wheat with unquenchable fire. Let us draw up a table of comparative duties, responsibilities, and avocations. Unless we come to the opinion that a human being consists of a variety of chemicals and a couple of bucketfuls of water, we shall think that man has a soul, and that this soul is deserving of primary attention. Then the apostles of culture, Mr. Matthew Arnold being the Choregus, all tell us that mental development is the one great duty of human nature. They may entirely ignore spiritual developments, but they account a man hardly worthy of life who is unsusceptible of intellectual expansion. At this point, indeed, I should like to split a friendly lance with the philosophers. Some clever novelist, James Hannay, I think—and a really clever novelist is necessarily something of a philosopher—says that a man had better worship a crocodile than worship nothing at all. I do not profess to vindicate such a very extreme supposition, but this I say, there are multitudes, nay the majority, of the human race who have no chance of literary and intellectual culture, but who nevertheless, through every hour of their lives, may be carrying on a spiritual education. Then after this mental education—for which, in my humble way, I desire to be a strenuous advocate—I put down health as the third great point to be aimed at. I know that many sensible people would put down this as the chief point of all; but I have not adopted this classification with-

out considering things all round. But I think that a spiritual and immortal being—on the hypothesis that we are spiritual and immortal beings—would deliberately prefer mental and spiritual health to mere physical health. Some of the best work in the world has been done by people who, on the Spartan system of exposing the weakest on Mount Taygetus, would simply be put to death as useless and unproductive members of society. Then after this comes the question of ways and means. We all want to make a little filthy lucre. Each man wants to make his 'little pile;' and the bigger that little pile, so much the better. *Diva Pecunia*, in the opinion of many, ought to come in the very first of all. We all remember the words of the Latin satirist: 'Money; honestly if it is to be done, but anyhow—money.'

Then, advancing a further stage, we put down amusements. It is all very well for Sir George Cornwall Lewis to say that life would be tolerable without its amusements. I have no doubt that Sir George 'took it out' in the way of amusements as much as any of us. Recreation is related to work as shadow to sunshine, or down-hill to up-hill. Now you will observe these five essential points. Count them up on your five fingers. The soul, the mind, the body, means, recreation. These things are all absolutely essential, the only question being as regards the order of seniority. Whether we have too much to do or too little to do, something has to be done in respect to these things. But the population of the British islands being mostly fools, most people reverse the order of things. So you will find people who will occupy themselves with any 'petty'

engagement, while they cannot be brought to consider matters of the highest import. Now, in the case of the five points of our human charter, people generally begin at the least and lowest. The uppermost idea in the minds of people is not duty, but pleasure, whatever the particular theory of pleasure may happen to be. Epicurus placed his idea of pleasure in a certain order and calm of life; and I suppose that the name and memory of no philosopher was more maligned and belied than his. But just accept this theory of pleasure as the groundwork of one's social philosophy, and every man seems tolerably free to attach his own interpretation. Then after this most men put down the making of money as 'the one thing needful,' this making of money also constituting the special pleasure of a great number of people. When the making of money involves an expenditure of time, strength, and thought beyond a certain point, then the making of it beyond what is necessary is a mistake. Money is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. You will find men giving up everything that makes life desirable simply that they may accumulate money in public securities, or have a large floating balance at their bankers.' They are like children playing at some childish game—little bits of paper come in, and little bits of paper go out, and that is all. The notes of the Bank of England have no more real value than notes of the Bank of Elegance. A man is worth not what he has, but what he can get the use of. I know some people who are nominally worth their hundred thousand a year, but in reality they have not many hundreds. The property does not belong to them, but to their representatives.

Frequently they have no idea who those representatives may be.

But it might be thought that people would at least show wisdom in respect to health. No school of scepticism is possible on this point. No critic arises to tell people that care for one's health is altogether a baseless tradition. The laws of Nature are, no doubt, very benign; but if you manage to run your head against them, so much the worse for you. Nature may be our mother, but she is also quite capable of showing herself a stepmother. The laws of health work in the same calm, persistent, inexorable manner as the laws of the seasons and the orbits of the heavenly bodies. No doubt the conditions of health are better understood, and people are beginning to think, with the ex-Premier, *sanitas sanitatum, omnia sanitas*. Still there are people who live in the utmost defiance of all the laws of Nature; people who will gobble, though they know that they are digging their graves with their teeth; who will drink unwholesome beverages, though they might well fear gout and gravel; who will work hard long after the tripod of life—brain, heart, lungs—has shown symptoms of weakness and distress in one direction or another. But men will not abandon their darling pursuits, trusting to the chapter of accidents or the vigour of their constitutions. In matters of health there is no such thing as a chapter of accidents, except indeed of unfavourable accidents; and if men live long with a good constitution under unfavourable conditions, they would live still longer under favourable conditions. It is in vain that you tell a man in the full tide of business that he is working inordinately, and that he will break up. He continues to

work inordinately, and, as a matter of fact, he does break up. Generally speaking, a man has dense ignorance of the laws of Nature; and if he knows something about them, he will sin against his lights. Then as for his mind—or what he is pleased to call his mind—it appears to me that the average Englishman is less and less given to mental effort. Reading occupies a larger area, but is much more shallow than it once was. It is taking the most dangerous kind of personal liberty to try and improve a man's mind. To feed low and to think high is an exploded theory; the practice is the very reverse. The mind has little chance in the competition with the love of amusement and with money-making. And when we come to that mysterious soul of ours, that royal guest is frequently so utterly disguised, that men take no note of its existence, or hardly rise beyond the poor soldier's prayer on the eve of battle: 'O God, if there be a God, have mercy on my soul, if I have a soul!' Thus the first are last, and the last first. The rule of inverse proportion is maintained. In the main necessary business of life, men give the highest degree of attention to matters of smaller importance, and a smaller degree of attention to matters of the highest importance. Men, too, often think that the meal is more than life; and ladies, that the raiment is more than the body.

Finally, there is an old distich which has been running in my mind, and which is well worth the quoting:

'Don Juan Fernando
Can't do more than he can do.'

And the happy fact is that Don Juan Fernando is not really required to do more. When the Don has done his 'level best,' or

his little 'possible,' he may rest upon his oars and be thankful. We may not have time to waste; but we have enough in which we may work. Our burdens were never meant to crush us.

It was one of the fine sayings of the first Napoleon, one of the views which redeem the blackness of his character, when he saw a lady standing in the way of a poor soldier carrying a load, 'Madam, respect the burden.' If we feel that we have too much to bear—a burden of sorrow, of sin, of care—we know the words

set to Mendelssohn's immortal music, where we may cast that burden. And for those generous souls whose regret it is that, disabled by sickness or circumstances, they lead obscure uncomprehended lives, afar from the fray, devoid of its honourable dust and toil, there is the consolation that from their ranks are drawn those who think and pray and sympathise.

'His rank
Is kingly; thousands in his presence
stand,
And speed o'er land and ocean without
rest.
Those also serve who only stand and
wait.'

A LAST APPEAL.

O LOVE, my days are not so very bright,
Nor is the world to me so very fair,
That I can learn to live without the light
Of your sweet eyes, and what Love shows me there.
Dear, think a little ere you cast away
All hope from me, all gladness from my day.

Say, why must words from those who know me not,
Who cannot know what thoughts are in my heart,
Impose on me so hard and sad a lot,
And set our lives so very far apart?
Love, tell me, are those friends so much more true
Than I have been, who showed me false to you?

I swear to you my heart has never swerved
In faith and love, and all those things are lies,
Or misconceived, which yet so well have served
To banish me from those most gracious eyes.
O dearest, I have not deserved disdain;
Consider yet, and trust in me again!

C. H. M.

HOW I BECAME A MURDERER.

I.

'Thou shalt do no murder.' I suppose that the response which sane men and women make in church to the sixth commandment is about the emptiest and most formal prayer of which they are ever guilty. Ask yourself, reader, if you have the faintest ghost of a fancy in you that, under any conceivable or imaginable combination of impossible circumstances, you could ever feel called upon to pray with meaning to be delivered from the temptation to murder, in cold blood, a fellow-man or fellow-woman? You have read history, and you read the newspapers, and you know that murders are not uncommon things. But, nevertheless, you think of them as belonging to an outside world, with which you—otherwise than as a just possible victim—cannot possibly have any sort of concern. You would as soon think of praying to be delivered from the sin of witchcraft as from the sin of murder. They are alike impossibilities to you. Of course I assume you to be of the type of the average reader—sane, but for a few harmless and probably wholesome crotchets; educated in the ideas and feelings of your time and country, and in sympathy with them; respectable and prudent in all weightier matters; and as comfortable, within and without, as the majority of your neighbours. If I were to tell you that you are a potential murderer, you would not even be angry with me—you would simply smile at such an absolutely pre-

posterous notion. And so, in the face of such an accusation, should I have smiled—once upon a time.

Judge for yourself if I should not have had the right to smile. My name, by the way, is Alfred Lambourn; and I consider my name as of some consequence to my argument, because I happen to be one of a family which can carry back its history for an exceptional number of generations, and without being able to name a single member of it who was not perfectly respectable and perfectly sane—not taking into account a certain hereditary tendency to let ourselves be imposed upon and our money to slip unaccountably through our fingers in the most contented manner. I should say that our family characteristics were steadiness, prudence, and plain common sense, combined with a somewhat inconsistent indifference to becoming higher or richer than we find ourselves at starting. But of course we have our distinguishing marks among ourselves. I am a solicitor; and I cannot at this moment call to mind a case of a man's being murdered, at least in the flesh, by a solicitor. I live quietly, and in harmony with all my tastes and inclinations, in a little place close to the sea, and am, as I have always been, particularly strong and healthy, and fond of using my limbs without entirely neglecting my brain. I have a few cupboards in my house, but have never had the ghost of a skeleton in one of them. I have no turn for dissipation, and am quite as well off as I want to be. In spite of my pro-

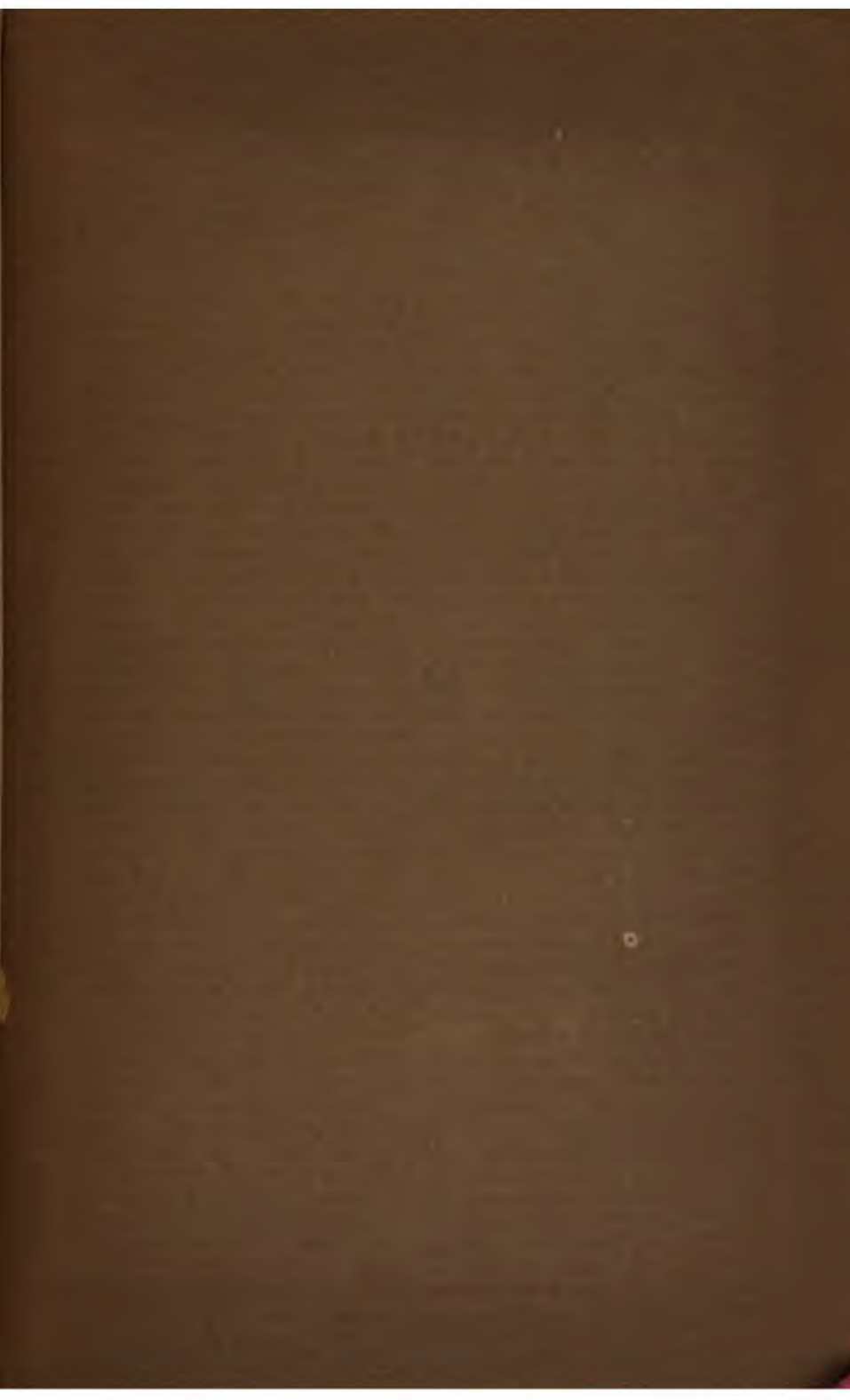




FIGURE 1. A PERSON IN A HEAVY PARKA.

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fession I am, and have always been, absolutely without an enemy, which may be partly accounted for by the fact that I have exceedingly few neighbours and scarcely any clients, my practice consisting in a semi-legal semi-agricultural stewardship to the best and dearest friend I ever had in the world—friends, I should say; for his wife is as dear to me as if she were my own sister, and his children as if they were my own. Whom should I ever have been tempted to Murder, and why? Put the same question to yourself of yourself—and answer it if you can.

My friend was Sir Reginald Gervase—of course you must allow just as much accuracy to my proper names as you please. He had one of the largest estates in Foamshire, and lived mostly at St. Moor's, a splendid place near Spendrith, which is on the wildest and rockiest part of that grand and magnificent coast, as all the world knows. My description of him is short—he was, literally, the best and finest fellow in the whole world. Were Lady Gervase writing this story, I have no doubt she would say a great deal more of him; mine must be a man's praise of a man. He had not a single fault that I could ever discover, and yet was as far from being a prig as the South is from the North Pole. He was nearly my match—which is saying something—in point of chest and biceps, and infinitely more than mine, or most men's, in brains; and his heart was larger still. I sometimes used to think it his single misfortune that he was so rich and so happy and so full of a sense of all the duties that his birthright had thrown upon him. Had Fortune left him the struggling barrister that he was when I first met him in London, he would

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have made himself a great man, instead of merely growing into something much greater. For he had by no means been born to a baronetcy and the ownership of St. Moor's. He unexpectedly inherited it from a cousin of about his own age, and apparently as strong and as healthy as himself, who had been struck down by death when hardly thirty years old. It was a change to turn most men's brains, and to send half of them to the devil. Sir Reginald took his wealth and his position with less elation than he had taken his first brief, went abroad for a while, and then came back to settle down for good at St. Moor's. The first thing he did—which was in an hour or two—was to become first favourite of the whole country, and that among his poorer, even more than among his richer, neighbours. The next was to send for me, then managing clerk to a London firm, to be his friend and counsellor. The next was to marry, as wisely as man ever married in this world. He had fallen over head and ears in love with the best girl in all England, and she with him. Before long they had a family of two boys and two girls, and were fortunate in them all. The eldest was called Reginald, of course, being a first-born Gervase. The next was called Marion, after her mother. Then came my own godson, Alfred; and then Nora. Their names have nothing to do with the matter, but it is pleasant for myself to write them. It is hardly more to the purpose than to say that I too was on the eve of marriage, after a long and weary waiting; but this, too, I like to tell because this also was due to the position in which Sir Reginald had placed me. What did I not owe to him? Past, present, future: everything that I like

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to remember, all my happiness now and to come. The one trouble he ever gave me was the feeling that I could do so little for one who had done so much for me. Anybody could have looked after his affairs as well as I. I was never likely to be so much to him as the Mouse was to the Lion.

In fact, the hardest work I ever did for him was all pleasure and play; except that he made me feel its interest and importance by throwing himself so heartily into all that concerned the smallest cottager or fisherman with whom he had to do. He looked upon life as a trust not merely to be fulfilled but enjoyed, and his wife agreed with him. I hardly know which we learned to like best—our tasks or our pleasures. That he liked the tasks best, I am sure. And I am sure, too, that if Sir Reginald Gervase, even in this nineteenth century, had taken it into his head to declare war against the Queen, there is not a man within ten miles of Spendrith who would not have turned rebel.

For two months every summer St. Moor's was left empty while the master and mistress were in town; for they were by no means people who looked upon rusting and falling out of the great world's stream as one of the duties of those who have to do their best with the course of a comparatively small one. Though I missed them, I approved of their absence, for I could not get rid of my ambition for my friend; it would be something if, as member for Foamshire, he could have the chance of doing for England some little of what he was doing for one of her remoter corners. One warm afternoon, while they were away in town, I was engaged alone in my office with some drainage plans, half at work upon them, and half thinking about what I could do, in the face

of an approaching election, to get Sir Reginald Gervase to stand for Foamshire. It was too hot to work very desperately after an early dinner; and I am afraid I must confess that the rich blue of the sky without, the soft wind that scarcely took the trouble to carry the weight of its own scent through the window, the caw of the rooks on their way home, and the regular heave and rush of the sea against the wall of rocks close by, united to set me dreaming of anything but of drains. I was myself in love, remember, and Venus came from the sea on much such an afternoon.

I had a clerk in the outer office, who was also in love, and whom I strongly suspect of having been sleeping too. Our office was certainly not conducted on the ordinary principles of hurry and open eyes—a client from the outside world did not call once a quarter, and was not particularly welcome when he came. At any rate, Tom Brooks looked as if he were still dreaming when he stumbled into my own room and startled me with,

'A strange lady, sir; and to see you!'

It is hard to wake up all at once. For a moment I almost took for granted that it could be nobody but my Lottie, who had managed to fly through the window all the way from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, at the other end of the kingdom; what other lady, a stranger to Tom Brooks, could want to see me? But a moment more told me the absurdity of such a fancy; so I stretched myself, rubbed my eyes, and said sharply, 'Then wake up, and show her in.'

She came in, with a silky rustle; and I had certainly never seen her before. She Lottie, indeed! I never can guess a woman's age, so I must content myself with saying that my visitor could not possibly

have been more than thirty-six or less than twenty years old. She was of a moderate height and graceful figure, and was dressed much more fashionably than we were used to round Spendrith,—in a brown silk with bows behind and down the sides, a tight-fitting jacket and a sort of nondescript cross between a hat and a bonnet, from under which escaped a mass of fair brown hair—behind, in thick waves that flowed down to her waist, and, in front, in a fringe falling down to her eyebrows. Her face was a pretty one on the whole, clear complexioned, fair, and brightly coloured; but her mouth was at the same time too small and too full, her nose too long, and her dark eyes a very great deal too large, as well as being too closely set together. Still the general effect was decidedly good, and had to be called pretty, whatever else it might be called, and however much it differed from my own two standards of beauty,—Lottie Vane and Lady Gervase. My visitor looked grave and sad by nature, and as if she had a story, and that an interesting one. I showed her a seat, and she sat down.

‘You are Mr. Lambourn: and you are a lawyer?’ she asked, in a voice that made her prettiness suddenly change into something more. It was a clear liquid voice, with some sort of special accent in it, and a kind of singing quality about her first words.

‘My name is Lambourn, and I am a solicitor. You call on business, I suppose? Whom have I the honour—’

She opened a mother-of-pearl case and handed me a card,—‘Adrienne Lavalle.’ ‘I come to ask your advice,’ said she. The name looked French; and yet, though she did not speak quite like an Englishwoman, her accent was by no means distinctly that of a

foreigner. Who could she be, that she came for legal advice to Spendrith? It is true that if anybody does happen to be suddenly in want of legal advice at Spendrith, he is bound to come to me.

I bowed and waited, and she went on.

‘I am told that you are able and honest,’ she said, ‘and therefore I come to you. You asked my name, and I gave you my card. It is one of my names, the name by which I am known. I have one more. My birth-name is Ray—Juliet Ray. Did you ever hear the name before?’

‘Never in my life,’ said I.

‘Then, before I tell you more, may I ask you if you are prepared to undertake, as a lawyer and as a gentleman, the cause of a woman against the most cruel wrong that ever was done by a man? A cause that will give you honour and glory throughout the land?’

‘Never mind the honour and glory,’ said I. ‘The question is, whether I could find the time and spare the pains. Of course I shall be glad to help to get justice done, just for the sake of the thing, lawyer though I am. But I must hear the story first—’

‘You shall hear it; and you shall hear why I come to Spendrith for a lawyer. I did not suppose you would know the name of Juliet Ray. But I had my reason for asking, all the same. I was born in London. I had a mother, Mr. Lambourn, but no other relation in the world. My mother was on the stage. I cannot tell you all, for I do not know; but we were in Paris when my mother died, and when I was seventeen years old: without the means to live, but with the need to live, you understand. Perhaps you will find it hard to believe, but I was as innocent then as a young girl can be.’

I let silence imply assent; but I was certainly beginning to wake up, and to call my professional wits together.

'It was in Paris that I met a young man—if I must call him so—who made love to me. I took him for a man of honour. He swore, Mr. Lambourn, a million times to make me his wife, in the sight of Heaven and in the sight of man. In the sight of Heaven he did make me his wife; and when we were soon after in London, he married me in church, as he should have done before. He is a scoundrel!'

'But if he married you at any time, he did his best to right you, it seems to me. Well?'

'I must not call him "scoundrel"! Wait; see what *you* will call him, if you are a man! We went abroad again—to Paris, to Vienna, to twenty places—and then one day he left me, never to return.'

'He deserted you? You did not hear from him again?'

'From him? No; never one word! Of him? No; not for years! He left me to live as best I could: without the means, but with all the need, once more. Perhaps you will not find it hard to believe that I was no more as innocent a fool as at seventeen.'

Again I let assent be implied in silence; so much I did not find it hard to believe.

'But I hear of him at last, and he is married again!'

'You mean that you wish your husband to be prosecuted for bigamy?'

'No, Mr. Lambourn. I mean that I will have my rights, and that I will have my revenge! That is what I mean!'

And I could see, beyond any question, that it was what she did mean. If her story was true, she

had certainly been ill-used; but, all the same, I wished she had not come to me. I felt that, from the beginning, I had not liked Miss, or Mrs., Lavalle.

'I don't care about taking criminal matters,' I said rather coldly. 'There are plenty of solicitors in the county. And if you want—since you speak of your rights—to make any sort of profitable compromise, I must decline your case on any terms. However, as you come for present advice, I suppose you can prove your marriage?'

'I can prove it as surely as that I live!' said she. 'I have my lines. Will that do?'

'Certainly they will do. You will have to prove the second marriage too—'

'He won't deny that,' said she, with a smile. 'And he won't deny that I am I; and if he does, he can't deny that I was alive when his crime was committed; and if he does, there are scores and scores who will know. You ask me why I come to Spendrith? It is to make sure—to have him under my hand. I have not found him out and tracked him down to let him go again. And I come to you because you are here; because you can watch for me. When I have my rights, you will have yours too, never fear.'

So she had set down my reluctance to undertake her case to a fear of not being sufficiently well paid? If I had not much liked her before, I liked her exceedingly little now. And who at Spendrith could possibly have been guilty of bigamy, and of deserting a wife abroad? I knew every living creature in the place—there was not one whom I could connect in the wildest fancy with Mrs. Lavalle.

'Who is the man you say is your husband?' asked I.

I suppose she thought that her last

words had refreshed my interest in her.

'The scoundrel who *is* my husband?' said she. 'There!'

A little theatrically she laid a document before me. It was a perfectly good and authentic copy of a register of a marriage solemnised at a London church between Juliet Ray, spinster, and—Reginald Gervase!

My eyes seemed to darken and swim. What could it mean? As she sat there, triumphant in her coming vengeance or in her greed, I thought and thought; and the more I thought, the more clear the meaning grew. Some months before the date of the marriage my friend had been in Paris, I knew. Just before the same date he had returned to town. And then there was his long subsequent absence abroad for nearly a whole year. But, still, was Reginald Gervase, who held duty to be even above honour—if such a thing can be—a man who, under any circumstances, would, when he found himself suddenly rich and in a high position before the world, rid himself of any woman—whether his wife or not, and even if he had learned to hate and scorn her—by leaving her to starve? No doubt she must have been false to him first. But even so, the pride of my own life had gone; every illusion I had darkened at such a shadow as this must be. Perhaps he had thought her dead? But, no, that could not be, unless he had willed very hard indeed to think her so.

'Leave me this paper,' said I. 'Call on me again to-morrow at ten; I will think over what you have told me. Excuse me now.'

'You will undertake the case, then?'

'I will try to do whatever is for the best, Miss Lavalie.'

'Who is Miss Lavalie?' asked

she, as she left me. 'I am Lady Gervase.'

II.

I LOCKED the copy of the register in a safe, where I kept my own private personal papers, shut up my office, and went out to walk myself cool. I had met with a skeleton from St. Moor's, indeed! I could see the whole miserable history as if it had been written out for me. The young barrister had made a fool of himself, as many otherwise wise men have done. He had been entrapped by this woman in Paris. Perhaps the pitifulness of her unprotected condition had imposed upon him quite as much as her bright cheeks and her great black eyes. She had stuck to him and drawn him into marriage; no doubt his sense of honour had helped her, however much his reason must have opposed her. It was she, no doubt, who had swallowed up the whole of his little fortune and kept him under water. It was she who had been the cause of those long vacations in Paris, which he used to make even during term time. And then, when fortune came to him, he had gone abroad to hide what had, no doubt, proved a disgraceful marriage. And then, no less beyond doubt, he had discovered unfaithfulness in her and had left her, half ashamed, half relieved, as such a man would have left such a woman, simply, utterly, and without a word of blame. And then true love had come into his heart. Perhaps he really believed his first wife dead. Perhaps the belief was too much due to the wish—who knows? It was not for me to judge Reginald Gervase. I knew the man as he was, whatever he had done, however weak he might have shown himself in one thing.

And what was I to do? Nothing?

Nothing? When I, and I only, realised the nature of the blow that was about to fall? On the one hand there was the true Reginald Gervase, my more than friend, brother, and father, who had plainly been able to free himself of the old shadow, trusted, honoured, loved by all the world, whose whole life was a growth in goodness and usefulness, and whose loss would be public as well as private, and felt none could guess how far round his home. There was the wife, who believed in him as a hero, and who loved him with her whole heart and soul. There were his young children—what need I say of them? On the other hand there were ruin, scandal, the dock, the prison cell, a wife's broken heart, and four children's lives blasted for all their days; and only because a worthless woman had not died. The thing looked too hideous to be possible; and I dreamed of such a word as—nothing! Well, thank God that he was not at St. Moor's. Every day delayed was a day gained, if only for thinking what could be done.

I was walking along the narrow coastguard path overhanging the sea, which was the shortest cut from Spendrith to the nearest market-town, when I was met by a lad who acted as rural postman and who stopped me with a letter. I took it with scarcely a word of good-evening, and opened it absently.

'Dear Lambourn,'—I read, without even taking heed of the handwriting,—'One line in haste to say that we shall all be home to-morrow evening, almost as soon as this reaches you. Everything's all right; but Jenny would rather be safe at home just now, and so would I. Look me up for a weed,

there's a good fellow, about nine, and we'll have a good big talk about the drains. I feel like a schoolboy off for the holidays.

'R. G.'

It was like destiny. He and his wife—yes, *I* would still call her so—were hurrying back full sail into the storm. I knew what their coming back sooner than usual meant: it was one of Gervase's crotchets that all his children should be of Foamshire, and of their home, bred and born. Well, that made matters worse a thousand times. He was coming where that woman—I could not call her his wife—was waiting to lay hands upon him and to destroy him more terribly than even she could dream. I was not to see her again till next day, and did not know where she was to be found. I suppose I had acted stupidly; but it is hard to keep one's presence of mind where one's heart is concerned too deeply. How could I meet Gervase this very night with this terrible secret upon me? I could not. And yet what right had I to leave him in his fool's paradise for a single avoidable hour? I tried to ask myself what I should have done had I been simply his lawyer instead of his friend. And I could find no answer. It seemed strange that the thunder of the sea, as it rose higher and higher with the advancing tide against the cliffs, did not change its tone.

The letter-carrier could not have left me many minutes—long as they seemed—when he came running back breathlessly, shouting and pointing behind him with his arm.

'Mr. Lambourn!' he panted out, 'there be some un down yonder on the Carricks as lone as lone, and not half an hour o' tide!'

I was startled out of such

thoughts as even mine. I knew every inch of that coast as well as if I had been a smuggler of the old times, and nobody who knows the cliffs about Spendrith needs telling what being alone on the Carricks means within even an hour of high tide. The Carricks are a point of rather low rocks, projecting something like the blade of a scythe, or rather like the pointed ram of an ancient galley, from the base of the cliff, easily to be reached within about two hours of the highest tide; but, after that, breaking the calmest sea into a rage and entirely cut off from reach either from above or below. At absolutely full tide the most shoreward of these rocks was a full couple of fathoms under high-water line. The cliff, itself a promontory, rose up sheer from the rocks for some distance, then bowed out over them, and then finished its course of some hundred and fifty feet to the overhanging path on which I was standing. All these meant, in a dozen words, that he who found himself alone on the Carricks half an hour before the tide turned would be a dead man in half an hour, for there was no point among the network of currents which the strongest swimmer could hope to gain.

'Who is it?' I asked. 'Could you tell?'

'I couldn't see for sure; but it looked to seem like Lucy Green that keeps company with Master Brooks—'

'A woman—good God!' In this peril, at least, something might possibly be done. As fast as I could cover the ground I was at the coastguard station, only to find a single old sailor on what was by courtesy called duty, a strong fellow enough, with any quantity of rope at hand; but what could two men do?

Nothing, certainly, without try-

ing. We could carry to the edge of the cliff rope enough to reach the Carricks twice over. But that was little. How could a woman, even if she had the courage, fasten herself safely to it, and keep herself from being dashed to pieces against the face of the cliff on her giddy upward journey? And how could one man reach her, with but one pair of hands to hold the rope above him?

Happily, the sea was tolerably calm; otherwise, considering the shortness of the time at our disposal, nothing could have been done. It was only too certain that somebody was there: the letter-carrier was positive that he had twice seen a woman on the rocks; the second time, while I was on my way to the coastguard station, he had seen her trying to clamber farther out seaward, as if she had become fully aware of her danger, and was trying to place herself where she might have a chance of being seen from the shore. I looked at my watch, and the sailor looked out to sea. There was no boat that could be signalled, and not nearly time to obtain one for ourselves and to row round.

The question of the boat was settled in a single look from one to the other. But the same look set the sailor's wits working.

'Run to the station,' he said to the letter-carrier, 'and get all the oars you can lay your hands on, and bring them here, and look alive.'

He craned over the edge of the path, and so did I, though more cautiously; but there were no means of seeing anything more in that way. The sea had already risen in a surge of white foam and dark-green cascades over nearly the whole length of the rocks below, so that any prisoner upon them must have been driven for respite from death under the bulging part

of the cliff, where she would be altogether out of sight of all but the sea-gulls. Then the old sailor looked out westward, where a broken patch of white and gray cloud seemed to be rising from the sea into the sky in the shape of a spire.

'The wind won't be here till after the turn, sir,' said he. 'There won't be so much swing on as there might be.' He put his hands to his mouth and shouted downwards, but no answer returned. 'Where's that young slug with the oars?'

I could only hope he had some plan. I certainly could think of none. Perhaps, though as anxious as any human creature must be when a man or woman is drowning under his eyes, and when he can do nothing but wait above and listen for the dead heave of full tide against the cliff to tell him all was over, I may not have been so absorbed in the emergency as I should have been two or three hours ago. What was a moment's struggle with the sea compared with that worse than death against which I was trying to put out my hands no less in vain? I was not, I feel sure, at that moment consciously thinking of the greater peril in the immediate face of the less; but that it was the greater which had well-nigh paralysed me I know.

At last the lad hurried back with four long oars. The old sailor laid them all together, fagot-wise and bar-wise, over a cleft in the edge of the path, so that the bundle of oars might serve for one strong beam, and that the rope might run through the cleft for a groove before swinging from the projecting rim of the cliff out into the air. The beam of oars was kept from being pulled forward instead of downward by the form of the path, which rose up slightly

towards the edge, and by the chance—on which the whole plan depended—that the natural gutter ran between two ears of crag just high enough to serve as posts for the beam behind them. He fastened one end of our longest line of rope, with practised skill, round the middle of the oars; he had already made the other end into a noose, as soon as his ready eyes had taken in at a glance the chances of the ground. He paid out the whole rope over the edge of the cliff: there was no time left for arguing about who should go down.

Indeed I felt as if forced by an impulse from outside myself to take that matter into my own hands. It is true I was a great deal younger and by so much the more active than the old tar, who was still as strong in the arms and shoulders as tugging at oars can make a man, but had certainly not been in the habit, as I had been, of spending his leisure in clambering among rocks instead of staring through a spy-glass at the offing; so that I was likely to feel a great deal more at home among the gulls and cormorants than he. There was every reason for placing him at the fast head of the rope, and me at the noose. But had it been otherwise I should have stood upon my rights, as representing the lord of the manor to do as I pleased above the line of high water. Do something I must—something, anything which had the semblance of helping a living creature, however unconnected it might be with the storm that was gathering over the head of my friend. As I have said, there was no time left for a needless word; I took my way, and, resolutely thinking of nothing but of keeping my eyes fixed on the highest visible part of the cliff, was, before a word could be spoken, letting my-

self down the rope with my knees and hands. It was not that I had room left in my heart to care, save in the most general way, for the woman on the Carricks. I was in anything but a philanthropic mood, or in one that would excite me to risk a sprained wrist for any soul on earth but Reginald Gervase. It was all sheer impulse: neither foolhardiness on the one hand, nor courage on the other. I claim no credit for the climb; rather blame. It could in nowise be of the smallest help to Gervase; on the contrary, I was risking the only life that could in any way hope to aid him. Only I had no hope for him left in me, in the face of the proofs and of the woman in whose hands they were. It all came from just what I have said, the overwhelming hunger for action of any sort or form.

Of course our idea was to fasten whomever I might find below to the loose end of the rope, in the hope that the sailor, with whatever help the letter-carrier could give him, would be able to draw her up, and then let down the rope again so that I might follow. With a view to the first part of the work, I carried down with me a second rope to fasten to the noose and to act as a guide from below, so that she might not swing against the face of the cliff on her upward journey. As to my own return, I might manage a good deal by climbing, or I might at any rate be pulled up far enough to swing above the tide until farther help should come.

At last I stood upon the last slab of slippery rock which the sea had not wholly covered. There was just room enough upon it for two. And I stood face to face with Adrienne Laval—nay, I must call her so—Lady Gervase.

Why had she been brought

here, out of the reach of all aid but mine? Why had the tidings of her peril been brought to me? What was the true nature of that impulse which had brought me—me of all men—face to face with her thus, and here?

Think of the first sentence of this history! We were absolutely, utterly alone, together, unseen even from the cliffs that rose up between us two and the whole world. Her secret was known to me alone; its proof was in my own hands. If she had died there unaided, what would have signified the loss of a woman such as she? Why had she not been left there to die? And, if she was left to live—in one instant I saw the whole of that vision upon which my mind had been dwelling ever since she had left me—the ruined lives, the broken hearts, all the world's loss, all the shame, all the cruel punishment of an innocent mother and her children for the weakness of a good man. I had despaired of helping them all. But what was that now? Nothing, less than nothing, when I realised that all this storm would burst upon them, no longer from the hands of this woman because she lived, but from *my* hands because I did not let her die!

Would there not be something unspeakably mean and cowardly in preferring the perfect serenity of my own selfish conscience to the lives of those to whom I owed more than even a worse sin for their sake could repay? Surely the ways of justice are not the same as human law. For the sake of others we must punish what, for the sake of others, we must call crimes; but we do not call crimes necessarily sins, and what we condemn with our cold reason we may in our hearts and souls approve. At last I could do *all* things for Reginald Gervase.

Was I to flinch, so that my weakness should let loose upon him all from which I could save him, and that in such a way that he would never even guess the peril in which he had been? I swear that I felt as if for this very purpose she had, as if by Providence, been delivered into my hands. If only that wretched lad had never caught sight of her! But was I to let such a miserable chance as that destroy Reginald Gervase? What was I there for but to counteract chance, and to do all things for him? Suppose I did *murder* her, what but good would have been done? I did not shrink from thinking of the thing by its name. I had completely cooled my blood by now.

What she read in my face, I know not. But something she must have read, for it was very far from the birth of a hope of rescue that I saw in hers. She seemed looking through my eyes into my heart, as if she feared it more than the sea. Neither of us spoke a word; but meanwhile the sea itself rose and rose, and the wind began to rise too.

I was absolutely making plans. I could leave her there—it would not be my fault if she had been found drowned. The body could be recovered at low water, and buried, and nobody would be the wiser. I must give up Lottie of course: it was one thing to commit a murder, but quite another to make her the wife of a murderer, even though of one who had right on his side. I could take it into my head to leave England, and should soon be forgotten.

'Can you save me?' she said at last. 'What are you going to do with me?'

'I? with you? I asked. 'God knows. What are you doing with Reginald Gervase? Look, the tide will be waist-high soon. I am *his* friend. Are your rights, or is

your life, the dearer to you? But I can't trust you.'

I turned faint and sick at heart. How could I nerve myself, even for *his* sake, to be strong enough to let this weak woman die? Suddenly a heavy wave swept over the rock, brought her to her knees, and would have carried her into deep water at once had I not instinctively thrown the noose round her and held her so. It must be done, though; it was some weaker self that had saved her for a minute more.

'You *can* save me, and you bid me sell my rights for my life?' she said, with real scorn, and with a courage that startled me. 'Yes, you say truly; you *are* his friend. Like master, like man.'

Should I have held her there till she was drowned? Should I have been able to face the unspeakable shame of returning to the cliff alone, or should I have waited there until the tide had covered me also? I say to myself, and I say to you, what I said to myself. God knows. I trust not; but I have never very confidently believed in the goodness of the good or in the badness of the bad, or the weakness of the weak or the strength of the strong, since that day.

'Ahoy, there! Hold on!' I heard a shout, and the grind of wood on the rocks, and the unshipping of oars. I think we were both in the boat before we knew where we were. She was saved without my help, and I—I scarce know from what, if from anything, I had been saved.

Sir Reginald himself was at the helm. What could I do now? Absolutely nothing, at last, except give up everything to despair. I waited for the storm to burst even there and then.

It was simply to my amaze that

no look or sign of recognition passed between the husband and the wife whom he—he, not I—had saved to destroy him. I waited in vain.

‘Thank God I saw you from the yacht in time!’ said he. ‘It was like you, old fellow, to try to break your neck for nothing, but I don’t think both of you could have got up without damage. May I ask the name of the lady whom I have been lucky enough to— Allow me to introduce myself.’

‘I am Lady Gervase!’ she said, with a scornful look at me. ‘I thank you, sir, for saving my life—’

‘Lady Gervase!’

‘You seem surprised? I am the wife of Sir Reginald Gervase, of St. Moor’s. May I know whom I have to thank for—’

‘I really must ask you to pardon me,’ said he, courteously bewildered. ‘But Lady Gervase happens to be on board that yacht yonder. I am Sir Reginald Gervase.’

What could it all mean?

If you, reader, cannot guess, you must be as blind as I had been. You must have forgotten my telling you that my Sir Reginald had inherited St. Moor’s from a cousin of his own age, and that Reginald was the family name. If that cousin had chosen to die suddenly before he had time to communicate with his wife or his friends, or to make a will, his wife was perfectly entitled to call herself Lady Gervase if she pleased; but it could not possibly affect his heir beyond compelling him to pay a certain part of the personal estate to the widow, which he was able enough to do. What a worse than fool I had been!

When I have heard people talk lightly of their temptations to do this or that, I have said, ‘The greatest and strongest temptation I ever felt was to murder, in cold blood, a woman who had never done me a shadow of wrong.’ People think me jesting; but it is true.

MY STARTLING HOLIDAY.

THE Sea Gull, moored in front of a wharf in Sydney Cove, and bound for San Francisco, is pouring forth volumes of thick black smoke, snow-white steam is rushing out at the waste-pipe, and the whistle warns laggards to hasten on board. The crowded deck is full of bustle and movement. The passengers are divided between looking after their luggage and bidding adieu to relations and friends. The sailors execute their officers' orders. The captain on his footbridge awaits the moment of casting off moorings, and chats with the pilot who is to take us past the Heads.

Twelve o'clock strikes; the ropes are let loose, and the vessel slowly gets under weigh. We glide in front of Fort Macquarie; then we pass Farm Cove, the charming bay which reflects the palatial Government House. The Botanic Garden and the racecourse next disappear. Then come the sunny villas of North Shore, which in turn give way to a severer and less cheerful landscape, announcing our approach to the open sea. In fact, we are now between the Heads, and already feel the heaving of the waves. The pilot bids us good-bye, and the steamer immediately enters that so-called Pacific Ocean whose fits of rage are only too visibly marked on the cliffs near Sydney. But to-day is calm, and the undulating sea reflects the azure of a cloudless sky.

Seated at the stern, I gazed at this magnificent country, where I had arrived ten years previously with a few pounds in my pocket,

all I possessed in the world, and with a respectable stock of determination and energy. That, and an incomplete education, were all that were left out of the wreck of my father's fortune. He, poor man, did not long survive his losses. But my Australian enterprises had been successful, permitting me to realise the long-cherished project of returning to and permanently settling in England.

Consequently, instead of sailing in a clipper which would have landed me in London in eighty or eighty-five days, I preferred the Sea Gull, in order to see a little more of the world, and not return home, as I had come out, by the shortest and directest route. San Francisco, the transcontinental railway, the City of the Mormons, Niagara, and New York were things to be seen; and, I will add, what mainly determined my choice was this steamer's giving us three days at Tahiti. Without being a learned clerk, I had read Cook's *Voyages* and his description of that enchanted isle. I had also seen by chance the narrative of a French naval officer, written in terms enthusiastic enough to excite the coldest imagination. I longed to behold the modern Cythera and the far-famed charms of the Polynesian beauties—the more so as, although so long a resident, I had never caught sight of a native New Hollander, nor had met with any other representatives of foreign races except a few Chinese, my neighbours at Paramatta. Verily, it was hardly worth while going to the Antipodes to see so little. Besides all this,

I had a letter of introduction to the British Vice-Consul at Papeiti.

The coast, growing gradually bluer and bluer, finally sank beneath the horizon. It was not without a sigh that I bade adieu to this promising land, where labour is always handsomely remunerated. It had filled ten years of my existence; and human life is not long enough to prevent our regretting the days that have passed pleasantly and advantageously.

While thus absorbed in personal reflections, I had not noticed that my fellow-travellers were assembling in groups close beside me on the poop of the vessel. The great majority were second and third class passengers. Only seven of us were first class.

Very noticeable was a charming woman, some twenty-seven or twenty-eight years of age, fair, with dark restless eyes, short and somewhat plump in stature, nevertheless graceful in every movement. At hand stood her husband, Mr. Scott, with whom I had had a few business transactions. Perceiving me, he shook my hand with a grasp like that of an iron vice, and then introduced me to his wife. Mr. Scott was a famous New South Wales agriculturist, and was believed to have acquired a very large fortune. He might be five-and-forty years of age, with the build of a Hercules. His head insufficiently raised above his shoulders, his grizzled whiskers cropped close like a clothes-brush, his eyes starting out of his head, gave him an unpleasing, almost brutal, aspect; and his thick black eyebrows, which met in the middle of his forehead, increased the stern expression of his countenance. Although now married more than six years, Mr. and Mrs. Scott were still without children.

He then presented me to a

French naturalist, M. Vial, who, for the last two years, had been making researches in the Blue Mountains and the neighbouring plains. 'M. Vial,' he observed, with a half-contemptuous grin, 'has eyes for nothing but the productions of Nature.' The other passengers were two Americans, and a young Englishman, Mr. Samuel Lawson, twenty-three years of age, led by a caprice to visit Australia, and returning to England through another caprice—unless some chance detained him on the way. He was a little taller than the common height, with a good-looking and open but rather delicate countenance, large blue eyes, and fair curling hair. His whole bearing was distinguished, though slightly effeminate. It would have been improved by more spirit in his handsome eyes and a more manly style of carriage. Still one could not help feeling at first sight a sympathy for this singular young man, whom the fortune left him by his father enabled to wander about the world without any definite object in view.

During the course of a long sea-voyage the days are monotonous enough. The blue sky and the blue waters doubtless mingle in a harmony which is full of charms, especially in the morning at sunrise and in the evening at sunset. This spectacle may content the sailor, who is occupied by professional duties all day long; but it soon loses its poetry for the close-confined passenger, who finds his compulsory inaction hard to bear. Consequently, every one kills time as best he can. The two Americans practised pistol-shooting on the sea-birds, the fishes, or even on a chance bit of wood floating by, in order to keep their hand in with the revolver against their arrival at San Fran-

cisco, where that charming little plaything is everybody's indispensable pocket-piece. Mr. Scott kept up with M. Vial interminable discussions and disputes respecting the wild plants and animals of the colony. Lawson devoted himself to a more agreeable task. Like a charitable fellow, he undertook to amuse Mrs. Scott, who, seated in a rocking-chair, filled up a great part of the day with assiduous toil on wool-work embroidery. But assuredly she felt interested in the young man's conversation; for frequently her needle came to a standstill, and more than once I noticed her, as if waking up from a dream, resume her work with feverish activity, at the same time casting a stealthy glance at her husband, who, however, seemed not to pay the slightest attention to her actions.

Scott, indeed, did not appear to entertain any great affection for his wife. At table he sometimes treated her with a disdain which implied the consciousness of great superiority over the poor woman, and also the forgetfulness of a husband's promise to love and cherish his wedded wife. Under such circumstances it was not to be wondered at if, through wounded feelings, she should have been tempted to listen, just a little, to the first flattering suggestions of the Evil One, which, be it remembered, are much more powerful on board ship than on land. I leave physiologists to determine the cause; the fact itself is unquestionable.

Days followed days, without bringing with them any apparent change in our existence. Nevertheless, I fancied I perceived that Scott became aware of Lawson's assiduous attentions to his wife. She also came less frequently on deck, as if she avoided all *tête-à-tête* interviews with him. More

than once the husband and wife were overheard at high words in their cabin. But these trifling details passed almost unnoticed. I was the only one who paid much attention to them.

One day, Lawson took his place beside Mrs. Scott and began an animated conversation. He was stooping over her, as if admiring the embroidery which she had in hand. At that moment, Mr. Scott came up on deck. As soon as he caught sight of the couple his countenance assumed an expression of brutal ferocity which made me shudder. They did not see him, and continued talking together. Scott joined M. Vial, to discuss one of their favourite topics, but keeping his wife all the while in view. His face had settled to its usual expression, his knitted eyebrows betraying the sole trace of the emotion he had just experienced.

I walked carelessly up to Mrs. Scott, requesting her aloud to come and admire a nautilus which luckily was drifting past the vessel. I saw at once by her looks that my interruption was far from welcome. Nevertheless, she rose from her seat to take a peep over the gunwale at the pretty mollusc, when she caught sight of her husband, of whose presence she had been unconscious. Turning pale as death, she returned to her chair, and went down to the cabin almost immediately afterwards. Lawson, who had seemed greatly annoyed at my intrusion, followed Mrs. Scott with his eyes, and then came up to me, and said, 'I thank you.'

It was a good opportunity to whisper a warning word. With the authority derived from my superior age, and the admission to be deduced from his laconic speech, I suggested that he was playing a dangerous game, and one unworthy of a man of honour. He assured

me that he had never overstepped the bounds of allowable gallantry, but that Mr. Scott was terribly jealous of his wife, all the while that he neglected her. He expressed, moreover, his gratitude for the hint that I had given them; not that he feared anything on his own account, but because he was unwilling Scott should make his wife more wretched by rendering her the victim of unjust suspicions.

Two days after this incident, and fourteen after our departure from Sydney, we sighted Tahiti, the queen of Oceania. Mountain-tops covered with eternal verdure, shores fringed with palm-trees and edged with white foam, were the first objects to attract our attention. Lofty peaks stood out in bold relief against the dark-blue sky. In their midst, like a giant, rose the Diadem worthily so called, being the crowning feature of an enchanting landscape.

We steered for Point Venus, rendered famous by Cook's observations of the transit of that planet across the sun's disk. Soon we beheld the reefs, on which the waves beat ceaselessly; but their force is powerless to check the equally incessant work of the myriad coral-insects which construct these submarine fortifications. The cocoa-nut trees of Matavai showed their waving plumes overhanging waters ever clear and calm. We rapidly approached the reef, which seems an impassable barrier to the ship's further progress; but a pilot came on board, and directed us to a breach in the reef, a narrow passage, the work of fresh-water currents, where the sea-swell left us, with apparent regret. A few minutes afterwards we cast anchor in the charming roadstead of Papeiti. In front of us, hidden by cocoa-palms, lay all the French maritime establishments; to the

right, the town, composed of small one-storied houses, was buried in thickets of flowering shrubs; to the left, the reef sent forth a roar resembling the sound of distant thunder. Finally, behind us, the little islet of Motou-outa presented the mouths of its cannons to guard the entrance of the passage.

Before we were fairly fastened to our moorings, we received the visit of the British Vice-Consul, Mr. Brander, who put both his house and himself at our disposal, in such a frank and friendly manner, as to render my letter of introduction perfectly unnecessary. He was a wealthy merchant, who owed his fortune to the pearl-fishery which he had undertaken at Pomotou.

We were impatient to land and to tread the soil which promised us such a variety of pleasures. Moreover, with three days at our disposal, we had not a minute to lose. We had agreed with M. Vial to explore the mountains of the interior; we had therefore to secure the indispensable guides, in order to start the following morning. But Mr. Brander's obliging offers caused us to alter our plans. He volunteered to pilot us in an excursion in which the ladies could accompany us. This of course made us renounce our former projects. So next day, M. Vial had to set out alone to investigate the environs of Papeiti, while Mr. and Mrs. Scott took a carriage drive to a cotton plantation, cultivated, with no great profit, by the house Suarés of Paris.

For my own part, I had accepted Mr. Brander's kind offer to act as my cicerone during that day, and I could not have had a better. Being married to a lady of half-native race, a near relation of Queen Pomaré, he thereby became closely connected with the Canaques, whose language he spoke

perfectly, and with whose history and amiable character he was thoroughly acquainted.

Papeiti, then the official residence of the Queen Pomaré and the French authorities, resembled a cheerful village, whose slight constructions were exactly suited to the delightful climate, in which illness caused by weather is almost unknown. Here, in front of an open door, a soldier was chatting with a Canaque young man clad in white shirt and trousers, with a straw hat, the last only of native workmanship. There, a handsome brown-skinned girl, dressed in a 'gaule'—a long robe without any waist to it—was leading a couple of charming children, in whose company their mother was following her husband, a superior officer, the representative of France at Queen Pomaré's Court. Seeing nothing but European civilisation about me, I expressed my disappointment to Mr. Brander, who answered that his object was to interest me in the progress already spread throughout the island, and that we were going to visit a Tahitian village.

Half an hour afterwards, in an elegant carriage drawn by a pair of horses, we were rolling along an excellent road, shaded by the deeply incised foliage of the bread-fruit tree, and which follows, along the coast, the gentle undulations of verdant hills covered with orange and lemon trees. Well-tilled fields bordering the road bore witness to the industry of the native inhabitants.

'Do not fancy,' said Mr. Brander, 'that such cultivation has always existed in Tahiti. It dates, for the most part, from the French occupation and the factitious wants which European civilisation has introduced with it. The time was when the happy Tahitian, by a

few hours' easy labour, could provide sustenance for all his family. The mayoré or bread-fruit tree (*Artocarpus incisa*) grew in all the valleys, and its abundant produce, baked in ashes, supplied him with wholesome and delicious food. The fei, or wild banana, covered the mountains; and the vigorous native, easily scaling the heights, returned with a couple of clusters of fruit which sufficed to sustain four persons a whole week. Oranges and lemons grow without the slightest care. The coast abounds with fish. In a few minutes the canoes were launched, and their bourao-twine nets were speedily hauled on board laden with subsistence for the whole of the village.

The young lads had to beat the bark of the mulberry-tree, to make the 'tapa' which constituted their cloth, while the girls wove on their primitive looms the 'maro' which encircled their supple waists. Sometimes they twisted those light garlands of pia (*Tacca pinatifida*), which are so becoming to their smiling countenances and contrast so well with their luxuriant and sweetly-scented tresses. Many a fine lady in the opposite hemisphere would pay a high price for a small bottle of that monoi which was the favourite perfume and kalydor of native beauties. Elsewhere, a professional tattooer traced on a patient's skin those complicated patterns which were the poor man's coquetry and, as the Tahitians used to say, the veil of the idler who could not make cloth. The people thus, without thought for the future, led an easy life, exempt from toil. Poetry, consequently, amused their leisure hours and contributed its charm to every festival. But feeling little inclination for warfare, though naturally brave, love, more frequently than heroic deeds, was

made the subject of their songs. No anxiety nor care disturbed their existence. Cheerfully they advanced towards the close of life, from which they departed without regret, in the hope of reaching a paradise that resembled the enchanted islands of our fairy tales.

The carriage stopped. We had arrived at the village of Point Venus, perched on a hill, whence the eye embraced a vast horizon. The houses, built of bamboos and thatched with pandanus leaves, were admirable for their perfect cleanliness, the exquisite taste of their interior arrangements, and the choice flowers which adorned the outside of every habitation. Healthy children, unencumbered by clothing, were racing with each other to and fro; whilst their mothers, clad in their paros, were attending to household matters, or were hastening down to the beach to take the bath which Tahitians rarely miss twice a day. Both men and women are expert swimmers and divers, even so much as to defy the shark who should be bold enough to venture within the enclosure of the reefs.

The fields around the village gave ample testimony to the active labours of the inhabitants. The banana, the taro (*Arum esculentum*), planted in perfectly irrigated spots, and other tropical productions, were intermingled with aubergines, egg-plants, and tomatoes, introduced from the South of Europe. Climbing plants, such as convolvulus, antigonon, and bougainvillea, overran bowers, walls, and verandahs. Every one saluted my guide, Mr. Brander, with a mixture of familiarity and respect; which salutations he scrupulously returned with the frankness deserved by their friendly relations.

We entered the house of the chief of the village, where we were
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grieved by a painful spectacle. His son, a young man of twenty, just returned from Europe, came home only to die of consumption. Unfortunately, that is the lot of many native races. Among the wants created by foreign occupation, the most imperious is the love of ardent spirits, of which they make a great abuse. Formerly, a mild kind of orange-brandy sufficed to gratify the taste for strong drinks which seems to be innate with every people, except those who, like the New Hollanders, are at the very bottom of the scale of humanity. But orange-brandy requires a tedious preparation, a great quantity of fruit, and its manufacture afforded the inhabitants of a village the occasion for a festival in which the whole stock was soon exhausted. The orgie over, every one returned to his usual occupations. At present, brandy *ad libitum* is supplied by Europeans; and very few are able to resist the temptation to poison themselves with the treacherous draught.

Such were Mr. Brander's observations while the carriage took us rapidly back to Papeiti. The sun had just set; the mountain-peaks were overspread with the softest hues; the air was cool; the flowers sent us their evening perfume wafted along by the expiring sea-breeze, and the nocturnal insects commenced their concert. But all these harmonies of Nature were unable to drive away the melancholy thoughts to which the sight of that poor consumptive lad had given rise. I foresaw the destruction of this kind and simple people, through that inexorable law which condemns inferior races to disappear before those more advanced in civilisation.

In the evening we all met at an excellent dinner given by Mr. Brander. Everybody was gay
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and good-humoured. Mrs. Brander did the honours of her house with a graceful charm exceedingly hard to describe, but which illustrated the peculiar attractiveness of Tahitian women. Their inborn coquetry suggests a thousand stratagems to enhance their good looks; and Nature has been so liberal to them in that respect, that they have no difficulty whatever in succeeding.

When about to take leave of our generous host, with whom we were to start early next morning for Fataua, he offered to present us to Queen Pomaré, who was giving an entertainment that evening. We gladly accepted, and immediately set out. The queen's residence was an enormous wooden building, surrounded by extensive gardens, where at that moment the leading members of the European colony and a great many natives had assembled.

Pomaré, who spoke a little English, received us very affably and at the same time with great dignity. She was then somewhat advanced in years, but must have been very handsome in her time. She was quite simply dressed in a 'gaule' of black silk, without any ornament; but the respect manifested by the principal officers around her testified to their appreciation of the high qualities of their aged sovereign.

Near her were grouped, without special order or precedence, the members of her family and her maids of honour—a charming troop recruited from all the islands over which the royal supremacy extends. It would have been difficult to find elsewhere a like assemblage of pleasing countenances. Their 'gaules,' striped or spotted with a medley of bright colours, left the neck and arms naked, fitting closely to a bosom worthy of the statues of antiquity.

Their hair, turned up at the back of the neck, was fastened by bows of pia combined with flowers, particularly those of the Cape jasmine (*Gardenia*). A few wore bracelets, and some pearls even were observable; but the majority had nothing to set off their dress but the hearty laugh which displayed the most beautiful teeth in the world.

I was absorbed in contemplation of the scene, mentally drawing mythological comparisons, when a strange sound struck my ear. It was a chorus of three hundred Tahitians performing a 'hyméné'—derived from the word hymn—a song without words, in which the guttural notes of the bass prevailed, imitating a French air, but a strange imitation, yet not devoid of harmony and a certain charm. Singing is one of the Tahitians' pleasures; and the queen, who was fond of listening to their music, frequently invited them to perform at her palace. The evening was far advanced before we thought of retiring and betaking ourselves to the hotel, where we were certain to fall asleep, although not rocked by the rolling waves.

Next morning at seven we set off on horseback—Mr. and Mrs. Brander, Mr. and Mrs. Scott, Lawson and I—for Fataua. A troop of natives preceded us, carrying the elements of a *déjeuner* which our mountain trip was sure to make acceptable.

The road, on leaving Papeiti, is the same as that to Point Venus; but on reaching the stream which waters the valley of Fataua, you turn off by a sort of broad bridle-path, which follows the winding course of the river beneath the shade of gigantic trees, amongst which we noticed *Aleurites triloba*, which produces the Bancoul nut. The valley, fairly broad at its opening, gradually grows narrower and narrower; its sides rise more steep-

ly, and we were soon travelling between two almost vertical walls of verdure, covered in fact from top to bottom with thick and densely tufted vegetation.

At first starting we were in high spirits, chatting over the events of yesterday. Little by little the conversation flagged, oppressed by the silence of this uninhabited valley, where not even the song of a bird was audible. Nevertheless, every one was cheerfully disposed. Mr. Scott even appeared to have completely forgotten Lawson's unwelcome attentions to his wife. The latter, moreover, carefully avoided everything that could possibly give umbrage to a jealous husband.

Hitherto we had travelled along a pleasant and commodious path; but when, on arriving at a bridge, our guide requested us to cross it, we all stared at it with uneasy doubts. For on the other side a sheer precipice uprose, and no trace of roadway visible. Mr. Brander, with a hearty laugh, informed us that we and our steeds were about to climb this wall of rock without incurring the slightest danger, and that we should also come down it again on horseback. Mrs. Brander had many times performed the feat without apprehending any risk. After this we could not subject ourselves to the suspicion of cowardice, with Mrs. Scott, too, remarking that just a trifle of danger would make the ascension still more piquant. Meanwhile, Mr. Brander, diverging a little to the left, pointed out a narrow path which zigzags up the steep face of the mountain. Our horses, who seemed used to these up-hill expeditions, resolutely attacked the ascent without setting a single false step; and we thus gradually mounted, with the prospect of attaining a vertical elevation of more than three hundred feet. This

route being mostly masked by trees, and in all cases by shrubs and bushes, it was only at intervals that we caught a glimpse of the valley below. A rushing sound, which grew louder and louder as we advanced, was explained to proceed from the cascade of Fataua. We had crossed its waters in the valley, and we should soon have a near view of the fall as it shot down from its starting-point.

'The spot to which I am leading you,' said Mr. Brander, 'is celebrated in the military annals of the island. It was there that ended the long and wearing war which the French had to undertake before gaining complete possession. Fataua is a veritable sugar-loaf, connected with Mounts Aozai and Orohena by a buttress or spur on which the Tahitians had established their intrenchments. Occupying impregnable positions, they never came down to the valley except to harass the French, who could not advance a step. This state of things remained a long while unchanged. Consequently, the natives, in their picturesque language, used to shout to the French, "We are in our own strong-box; you will not get it until the day when you have found the key." The key in question was Fataua. It must be had at any price; but the only access to it known to the French was the path up which we now are climbing; and to entangle troops in such a place was not to be thought of for a moment. At the summit, heaps of stones were piled, ready to cast on the heads of assailants. Ten men could have arrested the advance of an army.

'At last, one day, a native of the Marquesas presented himself to Commandant Bonnard, and said, "You want to get to Fataua. Give me two thousand francs, and I undertake to lead your men there

by a path of which I alone have the secret, and of which even the inhabitants are ignorant." The Commandant, greatly surprised, and fearing treachery, hesitated. The Marquesan resumed, "You know that the frigate-birds rear their young on Fataua. It is there that I go to collect their feathers for sale, and not a creature knows a word about it." His statement was perfectly true. He had no rival in obtaining those peculiar plumes, which the natives then preferred to almost every other ornament. The frigate-bird, though living for the most part far out at sea, breeds on the mountains, where it even perches on trees; but it is so shy and wary, that the two long feathers, white or red, which adorn its tail, and which the chiefs wear as a badge of authority, are extremely difficult to procure.

"The Commandant, no longer doubting, promised him the sum demanded. The Indian then said, "Give me twenty robust young fellows; that will be enough, and in three hours we shall reach the top." It was agreed that he should have the men he asked for, and that, on the day fixed for the expedition, the Commandant should divert the attention of the Tahitians by a demonstration in the valley.

"On the appointed day, an officer and twenty picked men, strong on their legs, lightly clad but well armed, and accompanied by a trumpeter, followed the Marquesan into the thicket, while three hundred marched ostentatiously into the valley below the Tahitian positions, firing volleys which had no other effect than to excite laughter and derisive gestures amongst the natives aloft. For soon, on the very summit, half a score of Tahitians were dancing a mad "*houpa-houpa*"—a national dance in the style of the *cancan*—

to signify their contempt of the French; others threw stones at them, by way of defiance. The troops then made believe to ascend the path. Instantly they were answered by a shower of stones and a discharge of firearms, which, however, were as inoffensive as their own had been.

"Meanwhile, the stated three hours had passed, and Commandant Bonnard began to feel uneasy, when a loud trumpet-blast was heard, which was repeated by the echoes from rock to rock. At the sound, the natives occupying the summit of the mountain ran down to the intrenchments by the shortest cut, at the risk of breaking their necks, and the Commandant had the joy of seeing those cunning devils replaced by his own men. They, taking only the time to plant a French flag, followed the traces of those whom they had dislodged, and in an instant were inside the intrenchments, already deserted by their scared defenders, who yet had not escaped quite quick enough, for five-and-twenty or thirty were taken prisoners.

"The Marquesan guide had kept his promise. By leading the French to the other face of the mountain, which the Tahitians themselves believed to be inaccessible, he had contrived to take them up that path which was known to himself alone. But what fatigue they had to undergo, to crawl and climb up those four hundred and fifty vertical feet! At every step, the men risked breaking their necks. Nevertheless, they followed their leader in absolute silence, taking care not to make the slightest noise which might put the Indians on the alert—in which case their death was certain, and would, moreover, be unproductive of any result. The sound of a musket striking the rocks would suffice to

destroy the French hopes of success. The natives, it is true, did not keep a look-out in that direction ; but the danger really existed none the less.

'After three and a half hours' climbing, the Marquesan at their head, when close to the summit, had pointed out to the officer, through an opening between the trees, the Tahitians amusing themselves with dancing and singing. Collecting his men, he made them sit down to take a short rest ; then, when all was ready, he ordered the clarion to sound his shrillest notes. At the trumpet-call, the whole detachment were to rush forward to the attack. But there was no need of fighting. The natives, fancying they had to contend with evil spirits, made their escape in the way we have seen.

'That unlooked for exploit terrified them so much that they gave up all notion of a struggle. One of them said that, when he heard the trumpet, his tongue started out of his mouth so far that he could not draw it back again. At any rate, the prominent idea amongst them was, who should make his legs go fastest. One young man, more nimble and more frightened than the rest, did not cease running till he got to Papenoo, on the other side of the island, where he related the capture of Fataua. All he gained by it was to have his story treated as so absurd, as to deserve the punishment of liars—a fustigation.

'And that was how the war was finished. We are now going to visit, in perfect security and quiet, the scene of that exciting episode.'

Mr. Brander's narrative made the time occupied by our ascent seem short ; and soon after he had concluded, we were on the mountain-spur, where the French have erected a redoubt. Our whole party united in a general cry of

admiration. A wonderful spread of landscape lay before us ; in the distance, the Diadem rose in all his majesty ; while nearer at hand the stream of Fataua darted into the valley by a vertical fall of nearly three hundred feet. Everywhere a splendid vegetation, lofty palms, enormous fei trunks, with an immense variety of other trees, sheltered the finely-cut fronds of ferns, intermingled with a carpet of herbaceous plants, whose sweet-scented flowers compose the perfumes of Tahitian fashionables.

Our eyes were still feasting on this unrivalled scene, when we were accosted by an old sergeant with well-curled moustache, who came forward to do the honours of *his* Fataua—a brave soldier, the guardian of the redoubt, where he led a hermit's life, 'the world forgetting, by the world forgot.' Leading the way, he showed us into his house, which was kept with the scrupulous neatness for which old French soldiers are remarkable. Mr. Brander's men had already laid out the *déjeuner*, and we sat down with hearty good-will to a table most liberally supplied. But our greatest surprise was a magnificent dish of alpine strawberries which the sergeant proudly set before us. They were *his* strawberries ; it was he who grew them ; and he fully deserved the compliments paid him on the success of his horticultural labours ; for we did not in the least expect to find that excellent European fruit in Tahiti.

The *déjeuner* was quickly despatched, because our great wish was to visit the environs, especially the natives' former Acropolis, now solitary and silent, where the only signs of human frequentation were a few narrow paths, kept open by the people who come up to gather fei.

The groves consist in great part

of 'boursaö' (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*), whose cortical fibre was once employed in the manufacture of clothing, but is now only used for rope-making. Its large flowers, three inches across, give a brightness to the landscape, which is generally wanting in tropical forests. Not a single noxious animal is to be apprehended here; even the scorpion is unknown. But, on the other hand, the island is far from rich in birds. The only ones we saw were frigate-birds soaring at an immense height overhead.

The ladies, already fatigued by their morning's ride, begged to be allowed to rest awhile within the fort; after which brief repose, Mr. Brander led us down to a natural basin hollowed out of the rock, along a picturesque path skirting the borders of the stream, where the current flows gently beneath the shade of magnificent trees, between banks richly decorated by lovely ferns and aquatic plants.

Out of this basin the water flows into another basin similar to the first by a narrow channel, which channel was blocked up, just then, by the large branch of a tree covered with tangled herbage. Consequently, this obstacle, acting as a sort of sluice-gate, kept the mass of water in the upper basin at an unusual height, as if dammed up in a reservoir.

From an opening in the second basin its contents pour down vertically into the valley, forming thereby one of the most beautiful cascades it is possible to imagine, and which before reaching the ground is converted into liquid dust reflecting all the colours of the rainbow. From the brink of the basin, easily accessible, we beheld the grand valley of Fataua, gradually widening throughout its whole extent, with its crown of mountains and its misty depths.

Having paid our tribute of admiration, we escorted the ladies to the fort, thence returning to the basins, to enjoy the pleasure of a refreshing bath.

While still swimming in the upper basin, Mr. Brander related how an artilleryman, venturing into the second basin, and drawn along by the current, was shot over by the waterfall and killed on the spot. Many people are foolhardy enough to run the same risk by bathing in the lower basin; in fact, hardly a single officer visits Fataua without showing his pluck by doing so; 'but,' he added seriously, 'it is really very dangerous.'

Scarcely had he closed his lips, when Mr. Scott swam to shore, climbed over the rocks which separate the two basins, and, without saying a word, plunged into the lower basin.

'Am I to remain here alone? Who follows?' he shouted to us. 'Shall it be said that the French are bolder men than we are?'

I excused myself, on the ground of being a very indifferent swimmer; but Lawson, for whom the taunt was probably meant, stung to the quick, answered, 'I will join you.' He left us with a warning from Mr. Brander to be prudent, and we soon heard the sound of his headlong plunge into the lower pool.

What happened afterwards is known to one single person and to God alone; but before many minutes had elapsed, the branch which sustained the unusual level of the upper pool gave way, causing the sudden rush of a mass of water, which nearly carried Brander and myself down with it into the lower basin. Indeed, it was not without difficulty that we succeeded in reaching the bank. We instantly ran to see what had become of our companions. Scott

was alone, hanging on by a bindweed which drooped into the pool, half-choked with water, and owing his existence to this fragile support. Lawson had disappeared. About his fate there could be no doubt; he had been precipitated to the bottom of the valley.

The first thing was to rescue Scott from his perilous position; his strength was beginning to fail, and he might easily perish before our eyes. Fortunately, a *bourão* rope lay on the bank. We threw it to him, and managed thus to haul him on shore. He was saved; but then past events recurred to my memory. Was Lawson the victim of an accident, or—of a horrible piece of treachery? Scott knew nothing; he had seen nothing, done nothing. Blinded by the mass of water, mud, and herbage, he himself had narrowly escaped destruction, and owed his life solely to his exceptional muscular power. What was the cause of the branch giving way? He could not, or would not, say; and dead men tell no tales. It was impossible for me to shake off my doubts and suspicions. The only thing certain was, that we had lost, by a most awful death, a pleasant companion, an excellent fellow, to whom I had begun to feel attached.

Mr. Brander summoned several of his attendants, and sent them with all speed down to the valley. We agreed to hide the sad disaster from the ladies as long as possible, by telling them that Lawson had started on a short excursion, with the intention of joining us on the way back.

It was with heavy hearts that we returned to the fort to make preparation for our departure thence. With a parting shake of the hand we took leave of the old sergeant, who, already informed of the accident, sympathised with

our silent grief. Then, mounting our horses, we commenced the descent, Mr. Brander leading the way, followed by Mrs. Scott; next went Mrs. Brander, Mr. Scott, and myself. Scott seemed to have quite recovered from the emotion naturally caused by his adventure, and chatted with Mrs. Brander in such high spirits as to attract his wife's notice and excite her astonishment. After proceeding in this way downhill about a quarter of an hour, we were met by a black fellow, out of breath and shouting in broken English,

'He dead! He break every bone in his skin!'

'Who?' asked Mrs. Scott, turning deadly pale.

There was no help for it, then, but to acquaint her with Lawson's death, and how it happened; on hearing which the poor woman was seized with a fit of trembling, and darted at her unmoved husband a look which I shall never forget. Terror, hatred, and supplication were all comprised in that single glance.

'Make your mind easy, my dear,' he said, addressing his wife and pretending not to understand her mute reproach. 'The danger I incurred was very trifling, and I now feel none the worse for it.'

Mrs. Scott made no reply, and continued to ride onwards without uttering a word.

My suspicions were confirmed; and yet— Could I believe that Scott, yielding to an infernal impulse of jealousy, had removed the branch to let the waters rush out, thereby exposing himself to imminent peril, in order to compass the destruction of the man whom he regarded as his mortal enemy?

We were still descending, when a distant roar warned us that a tempest was coming up. 'We must urge on our horses,' said Mr.

Brander, 'and not let the storm surprise us on this path, which, at such times, is dangerous even for pedestrians.'

The sun was soon hidden by murky clouds, and we already felt intermittent gusts of hot stifling wind. Big drops of rain fell around us, and then the downpour became a deluge, accompanied by lightning and rolling thunder which reëchoed from side to side of the valley.

A sudden flash half-blinded us; instantly came the pealing crash. Mrs. Scott, unable to hold in her frightened horse, was thrown over the precipice before our eyes.

'Ah, ah!' muttered Scott, loud enough for me to hear him. 'There goes the other wretched creature! Done for, without a chance of escape! Very well. 'Tis a good riddance of bad rubbish. I shall contrive to bear the loss.'

I suppose that something in my manner must have betrayed my opinion respecting the previous catastrophe; for, turning towards me, and showing his features contracted either by terror, compunction, or rage, he fiercely and imprudently added, 'You will not say now that I had anything to do with *this*, or that I have been the cause of her death too?'

'At least try and help her,' I indignantly answered, 'if help is still possible.'

'You can hardly expect me to take the same road as she has,' he replied, with a sneer; 'but if you feel inclined, you are at liberty to do so.'

Meanwhile, he hastened forwards, passed Mrs. Brander and joined her husband, who was riding as fast as the road, transformed into a torrent, allowed him.

I was unable to do the same. Mrs. Brander was in such a state of alarm that it was impossible to leave her unattended. I made her

dismount, and, leaving our horses to follow us, led her, hanging on my arm. In this way we reached a sheltered hollow in the rock, where, her strength giving way, she fainted. Although soon recovering consciousness, she was quite unable, for the moment, to proceed any further.

After the lapse of half an hour, Mr. Brander appeared.

'Make an effort to come with me,' he said. 'The poor woman is not killed outright. Perhaps we may be able to save her. The great difficulty is to get her across the river, as the bridge is partly carried away. I have left her under the care of her husband, whilst my people are putting a litter together.'

We set out afresh. The tempest was over, and we heard only its distant rumbling in the valley. The sun burst forth, warming us and drying our garments; but we were now indifferent to rain or sunshine. Our only thought was for the double disaster which we had recently witnessed.

Was the second mishap the consequence of the first? Had Mrs. Scott, in a moment of despair, thought to conceal an attempted suicide by causing her death to be attributed to her frightened horse? I could not believe that any real culpability had existed. She might be driven to the rash act by the disgust, hatred, and terror which her husband inspired. Her future life would henceforth, she might think, be insupportable. I communicated those suspicions to Mr. Brander.

We soon reached the bridge. She scarcely breathed; a crimson froth issued from her lips. She made no attempt to speak. Her husband was beside her, absorbed in silent thought. The only trace of emotion on his stony countenance was a deep furrow running

across his forehead from one temple to the other.

The water in the swollen stream subsided rapidly. The moisture dripping from the trees was the last remnant of the retiring storm. It soon became possible to cross the bridge. Mrs. Scott was gently laid on the litter, which had been strewn with fern-leaves covered with our cloaks, and the sad procession went on its way.

The road which we had followed so gaily in the morning seemed now long and wearisome. The only sounds audible were the stifled groans of our sufferer, which the movements of the litter provoked, in spite of all the porters' carefulness. As we advanced, her moans grew feebler, and finally ceased. An arm upraised, then falling motionless, told us that she had breathed her last sigh. Long after nightfall we entered Papeiti bearing only a lifeless corpse. We had been preceded, not long before, by the ill-starred Lawson's mutilated body.

The main facts of the case, immediately known, led to Scott's arrest the very same evening. The French authorities, refusing to view the matter in the light of a double accident, instituted an

inquiry. The crew and passengers, who had witnessed the behaviour of the several parties on board ship, openly accused the husband. Mr. Brander also had not maintained the same reserve as myself, but expressed his strong opinion that a crime had been committed.

Next day, after giving our evidence, we set sail in the evening, resuming our voyage without being able to fulfil the last duties to our unfortunate companions.

This halt at Tahiti, from which I had expected so much pleasure, affected me very painfully. Before me, at table, I had the empty places of those who were now no more; I could not drive them out of my thoughts. It was therefore a great relief when I beheld first the Farillones, and then San Francisco. I was thoroughly glad to leave the steamer in which the personages of this lamentable tragedy had travelled. The rest of my journey was pleasant and uneventful.

Subsequently, I learnt that the French authorities had set Scott at liberty, leaving him to his remorse or to his regrets. To which of the two he was amenable, I cannot myself yet exactly decide.

C. T.

AN IRISH MYSTERY.

From the Journal of a Sub-Inspector of the R.I.C.

*August 12, 186—*Joined to-day at my new station, Ballymacormack,* and took possession of my predecessor's rooms, they being, as I find, the only passably respectable lodgings to be had. Unpacked my luggage with the help of my servant, and spent the afternoon in getting my new abode into something like order, my share of the work being, I fear, chiefly confined to the construction of a tasteful trophy of pipes, spurs, and boothooks over the mantelpiece, which only looked blacker and grimier than ever from the force of contrast. Had dinner in the evening, very fairly cooked by my landlady, who keeps a curious little *omnium gatherum* of a shop under my premises, and seems on the whole a good sort of woman. Afterwards, having lit a cigar, I sallied forth to take a general survey of the place in which I was likely to spend some time, unless the authorities took it into their heads to shift me sooner than usual.

Ballymacormack has certainly very little of beauty or picturesqueness to recommend it. It is a dirty little village composed of one long street and one short one, running off at right angles. The longstreet contains a haberdasher's shop, another devoted to the sale of provisions and hardware of all sorts, and three public-houses. The small street contains my lodgings, yet another public-house,

* It is scarcely necessary to state that in this story the names both of places and persons are, for obvious reasons, fictions.

and a number of private dwellings of the usual dilapidated style, and leads down to a canal-lock, which, with its rotten floodgates and its dirty-coloured thick water, seems the very embodiment of dreariness. The only really well-built edifices in the whole village are the court-house and the barracks of the constabulary adjoining it, which are good substantial limestone erections, and might have given the inhabitants a lesson in architecture, were they not so thoroughly satisfied with the methods handed down to them by their ancestors. I strolled up to the barracks and made the acquaintance of the head constable, who with a sergeant and five men formed my small detachment. He was a quick intelligent fellow, as I found to my great satisfaction, for no one who has not served in the Royal Irish Constabulary can have any idea of the amount of trouble such an assistant can save his commanding officer. He inveighed warmly against the dreariness of the station, and the amount of work that was going on; but in the latter respect I could scarcely sympathise with him, as I rather enjoyed my duties, and was anxious to get a chance of distinguishing myself if it were to be had. Having found out from him all I could, I went back to my lodgings, as it was getting rather late, and committed these my first impressions to the pages of my diary.

August 17.—To-day I had a visit from Mr. Davis, who is act-

ing as agent to a Mr. Lugard of Westown, in the neighbourhood. He called on business, having received a threatening letter, the authorship of which he wanted me to trace if possible. After discussing this affair Mr. Davis presented me with Mr. Lugard's card and an invitation to dinner on the 18th, with a courteously expressed hope that I would not stand on ceremony, as his ill-health prevented him from calling on me in person. Of course I accepted; it was really very kind of the old gentleman, and I was beginning to feel a trifle lonely in my solitary lodgings just then.

As to Mr. Davis, he is a tall fine-looking man, and is inclined to be friendly. He seems by his own account to have a very hard time of it down here, from the hatred of the peasantry which he has incurred; and indeed on one occasion he appears to have had a very narrow escape of his life, having been fired at through the drawing-room window of Mr. Lugard's house as he sat there one evening. I had a pretty good proof of the estimation in which he was held by the people in general, when, just after he had ridden away, I happened to go down into the shop below for a box of matches, and there saw my landlady standing at the door and looking after the horseman with an intensity of hatred in her face which only an Irishwoman or an Italian could have been capable of, while she muttered quite audibly between her teeth the words of a curse in the vernacular, untranslatable into our sober English language, but very telling nevertheless. The nearest approach I can make to it is, 'May you have to fetch water for the souls in Purgatory in a bucket with a red-hot handle!' When she turned round and saw me she was not in

the least disconcerted; in fact, I fancy I was the more so of the two. I ventured to question her concerning Mr. Davis, but could get nothing out of her; indeed I scarcely expected to do so. Man, woman, and child, the Irish are all agreed on one point,—never to tell the truth to a police-officer if a lie is available.

August 18, 11.30. P.M.—Just back from Mr. Lugard's, where I had a really pleasant evening. The old gentleman is one of the right sort; I was only sorry to see him looking so ill. The family appears to consist of a son who is making his fortune in Australia, and a daughter about thirty years of age, decidedly good-looking. She and Mr. Davis seem to hit it off remarkably well together. I caught a glance between them once which showed they had some sort of mutual understanding, whether secret or not time will perhaps show. I wonder if Mr. Lugard knows anything of it? Davis, with all his cleverness and *bonhomie*, is not the man I should care to have for a son-in-law.

I don't believe the girl is happy either. I asked her to sing after dinner, and of all things she chose one of the short poems in *James Lee's Wife*. She must have set it to music herself, for I am sure it is not to be had in the shops, and she sang it without book. The pathos she threw into the last two verses was wonderful if she was only acting it:

'God help you sailors at your need,
Spare the curse.
For some ships safe in port indeed
Rot and rust,
Run to dust;
All through worms in the wood that
crept,
Gnawed our hearts out while we slept.
That is worse.
Who lived here before us two?
Old-world pairs.
Did a woman ever (would I knew!)

Watch the man
With whom began
Life's voyage full sail (now gnash your
teeth),
When planks start, open hell beneath
Unawares?"

It was certainly a curious song to select, and my belief is that she had a reason for it. Davis didn't look very comfortable during it either.

Sept. 2.—Last night I made a queer discovery: I was riding out about half-past ten P.M. to meet a night patrol of my men and see that they were alert. It was a very dark cloudy night, and so I carried a handy little bull's-eye lantern in my waistbelt to see my way by. I had to pass the avenue-gates at Westown, and just as I was going by I heard a suppressed cough, which was so clearly meant not to be heard that I immediately came to the conclusion that the cougher had cogent reasons for not being seen by a policeman, and accordingly turned my bull's-eye lantern on the spot. To my surprise, and not a little to my embarrassment also, the sudden blaze of light disclosed the forms of Davis and Miss Lugard standing just inside the gate. Both were in evening dress, but Davis had no hat on, and Miss Lugard had merely thrown a shawl over her head and shoulders. The situation was romantic, but also rather absurd; so, quickly withdrawing the light, I cantered on, hoping that in the sudden transition from darkness the eyes of my friends had been sufficiently dazzled to prevent their recognition of me. I wonder what on earth they were doing there? I daresay Mr. Lugard would be obliged to me if I let him know; but it is no business of mine, and I have little liking for burning my fingers by meddling with other peoples' affairs.

September 14.—This morning, before I was out of bed, I was startled by the apparition of the driver of the mail-car that carries out the letters to Ballymacormack from the county town. The man was in a great state of excitement, and I could get nothing out of him for some time but incoherent ejaculations. At length, however, I got him cooled down a little and heard his story. It appeared that he had been stopped on the road about two miles from the village by a man with his face covered by a black mask, who held a revolver to his head and ordered him to throw down the mail-bag into the road and then to drive on, with the comforting assurance that, if he looked behind him, he should have a bullet after him for his pains. My friend the driver, not being sufficiently interested in the Government property to risk his life in its defence, had complied with all his assailant's demands; and seeing in me, I suppose, a sort of *Deus ex machina* to get him out of his scrape, had come to me thus with his tale.

I hurried on my clothes and was soon on horseback with a couple of police attending, and we were shortly at the scene of the robbery. The driver had certainly indicated the place rightly; for the first object we beheld was the missing bag hung up on a twig in the hedge, with the seal broken, but the contents apparently intact. The road was a very unfrequented one at that hour of the morning, which accounted for our being the first to find it. Evidently the mysterious robber had not wished to give more trouble than was necessary for his own designs, or it would have been an easy matter for him to have sunk the bag and all its contents in a neighbouring bog-

hole. Such complaisance rather surprised me, as I should have expected an Irishman to have made away with the letters out of a pure spirit of mischief, if for no other reason. However, I took the bag on my horse and delivered it at the post-office, getting the man who took it to write out a few copies of a placard to be posted up in the streets (or rather in the one street) of the village, requesting any one who was disappointed in receiving a letter by that post to communicate the particulars to the postmaster. It was the only method I could hit upon for finding out if anything of value had been abstracted from the mail. To tell the truth, the story of the driver seemed to me so improbable that I very much mistrusted the man himself, and only wanted news of something having been stolen to bring him before a magistrate.

Sept. 15.—The plot appears to be thickening; but as yet I can make nothing of it. To-day I received a visit from Mr. Lugard's housekeeper—an old woman who had been in the family all her life, and was greatly attached to it. She had been crying, I could see, and burst into tears more than once in the course of her story.

It appeared, to put her somewhat unconnected tale into proper sequence, that Mr. Lugard's son had been expected home from Australia in the s.s. Carnatic, which reached Southampton on the evening of the 12th. He was not on board, however, when she arrived; and the captain made a curious report on his fate, which was published in the English papers, and thence copied into the *Irish Daily Express*, a copy of which the old woman had brought me. The paragraph ran thus:

‘STRANGE INCIDENT ON BOARD
AN OCEAN STEAMER.

‘A curious accident, or suicide—it is difficult to say which—occurred during the late voyage of the s.s. Carnatic from Australia. One of the passengers was a young man of the name of Lugard, son of Mr. Lugard of Westown, Ballymacormack. He had engaged a private cabin for the voyage home, and seemed very cheerful and in good spirits up to the day of his death. On the 7th September he retired to his cabin at his usual hour, but next morning he was nowhere to be found. His porthole was open, as the weather was very calm and sultry; so it is supposed that he either fell out, or threw himself out purposely, during the night; the latter explanation being perhaps the most probable, as the watch on deck had heard no cry from the water. The deceased gentleman left few papers behind him, and none giving the smallest clue to the motives of his suicide, if such it were. It appears from the evidence of the captain that, just after passing through the Straits of Gibraltar, they had spoken a fishing-smack bound for Cadiz, and Mr. Lugard had entrusted a letter to the men on board her to be posted at that port, so as to reach home overland before him. Unless, therefore, an explanation of his conduct be contained in this letter, it will be impossible ever to arrive at its true meaning. We understand that Mr. Lugard of Westown will be requested to afford what information lies in his power.’

‘You see, sir, he posted a letter himself,’ said the old woman, ‘and it never got here; and so I said to myself, supposing it was one of those that were in the bag the other day when it was stolen;

and I thought I'd best come to your honour and see if you could do anything for us. The master is fairly crazy about it all.'

'But why on earth should any one take the trouble to steal that letter?' said I. 'Much more likely it has been detained on the Continent somewhere, and will turn up yet.'

'That it never will, your honour,' said the old woman; 'and it's myself that thinks that Mr. Davis with his sly ways is at the bottom of it all. And to think they would ever say that poor Master Tom, that I loved like one of my own, would make away with himself, and he coming home to see us all again!' And, throwing her apron over her head, she burst into a passion of crying, making her body rock to and fro after the manner of the Irishwoman in distress.

I could do nothing for her of course; but I promised to write to the head post-office, whence the mail-bag had been sent on the morning of the robbery, to know if any one in sorting the letters had observed a Spanish postage-stamp. I don't expect any result, however.

Sept. 16.—Heard from the postmaster to-day. He says he distinctly remembers the Spanish postage-stamp, which struck him as curious, and also the address of the letter to Mr. Lugard; so that much is certain. Nevertheless, I can't believe that the mail can have been robbed for that letter; for how can any one possibly have known of its existence, even if that knowledge would have been of any use to him! Anyhow, I have received no other complaints about lost letters; so I suppose the case must drop, unless something unexpected turns up.

Oct. 28.—I have let my diary

slip, I fear, for a long time now; it seems scarcely worth while to begin it again, and I don't know that I should do so but that I wish to put on record a curious conversation I had to-day with Dr. French of the dispensary near here. I had become rather a friend of his, as he was a young man, and almost the only person I had to talk to about here. He came to see me to-day on his way from the inquest on poor Mr. Lugard, who seems never to have been the same man again after hearing of the terrible fate of his son, and who died last Tuesday. I got the doctor to stop and keep me company at dinner, and naturally our conversation turned upon the event of the day. Dr. French was rather abstracted for a while; but after dinner, when we were sitting over our modest decanter of Marsala (which, being generally pure, I much prefer to the usual brandied sherries one buys in England), he thawed a little. Finally, he said,

'If I tell you something, B, will you give me your word of honour that it shall not go beyond you under any circumstances whatever?'

I gave the promise, somewhat rashly perhaps.

'Then,' said the doctor solemnly, laying down his glass on the table, and looking me straight in the face, 'it is my firm belief that Mr. Lugard did not come to his end by fair means!'

I was utterly taken aback by this startling assertion.

'Do you mean that he was poisoned, then?' said I.

'That is about it,' answered French coolly. 'The man was in good health enough when I saw him last, the evening before his death; in low spirits, perhaps, but still as likely to live for the next ten years as any person of

my acquaintance. Next day I am called in to see his corpse, and they tell me he died of apoplexy in the night. Now, Mr. Lugard was not a bit the cut of an apoplectic man, and they are easy enough to tell; his was quite the opposite tendency. Besides, apoplexy seldom kills a man as fast as that; it gives warning enough.'

'But why didn't you have a post-mortem examination if you had any suspicions?' asked I.

The doctor took a long whiff of his cigar.

'I had a post-mortem safe enough,' said he, 'though the family were greatly against it, and I fear I have cut off my connection there by insisting on it. The body certainly showed symptoms of apoplexy, but that might be due to more reasons than one. Supposing I filled this room with carbonic-acid gas, it wouldn't take long to asphyxiate you and me, and there wouldn't be much appearance of poison about us afterwards. Really, the clumsy way people go about murdering a man, as a general rule, is most extraordinary. Why, there is one chemical liquid known as cyanide of kakodyl of which as much as would lie in a saltspoon would poison a room full of people by simply pouring it out on the floor, and I would defy the greatest chemist living to detect a trace of it afterwards. Mind, I don't mean to say that Mr. Lugard's death *might* not have been due to natural causes, though, if so, it was a most exceptional case. Anyhow, I had no grounds for mentioning my suspicions, not to say that it would ruin my practice as a medical man should I fail to establish them. So I gave the jury a scientific explanation of the immediate cause of death, which, as they didn't understand

a word of it, was very satisfactory to them. The cause of death lies between me and you.'

'Who do you suppose could have had any interest in such a crime?' said I.

'Ah, there you go beyond me. Mr. Lugard's property is left by will to his only daughter; but she was very fond of her father. I don't think she could have had a hand in it.'

'I should think not!' said I indignantly.

'Anyhow, the whole thing is only a conjecture on my part; the man *may* have died a natural death, as I said before. I must be off now; I have to drive over to see a patient at Ballydrin before I go to bed;' and, shaking hands with me, the doctor departed.

Nov. 4.—A curious thing has happened. Mr. Davis has come forward as husband of Miss Lugard, and owner in her right of the Lugard estates. It appears that they were clandestinely married a month or so before I joined here, which explains many things to me. If Dr. French was right in his surmises, here is a motive for the perpetration of a murder. One can scarcely believe it, however, and in any case my hands are tied in the matter. I can do nothing unless the doctor will speak openly, and that he won't do. It is a strange story.

AFTER-NOTE BY THE SUB-
INSPECTOR R.I.C.

Soon after writing the above pages of my diary I was unexpectedly transferred to another station, so lost the chance of following up the thread of the circumstances before narrated. Nevertheless when passing through Ballymacormack a year or two

